Relationship Between Head Nurses' Leadership Styles And Staff Nurses' Job Performance

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Abstract

Leadership plays a critical role in the job performance of nursing staff. Effective leadership can motivate and inspire nurses to deliver high-quality patient care, while impaired leadership can lead to job burnout, dissatisfaction, and poor performance. **Aim** *This study aimed to determine the relationship between head nurses' leadership styles (established via staff nurses' points of view) and staff nurses' job performance (according to the head nurse's opinion).* **Methods:** *A descriptive (correlational) research design was used. This study was conducted in Najaf city hospitals. A non-probability (convenience) technique was used to collect data. The study subjects included (51) head nurses and (350) staff nurses working in all units of selected hospitals. Data collection tools were a leadership styles questionnaire and a job performance evaluation questionnaire.* **Results** *revealed there is a positive correlation between leadership styles and job performance scores.* **Conclusion:** *there is a positive relationship between staff nurses' job performance and head nurses' leadership styles.*

Keywords: *Leadership, Leadership styles, Job performance*

Introduction

Increasing workloads, worker shortages, and rising costs of care are just a few of the difficulties that the healthcare system is currently facing. Nurses and midwives, who make up the largest group of healthcare professionals, are frequently at the center of these problems [1]. The Iraqi healthcare system has undergone significant changes over the past few decades due to a combination of factors, including war, economic sanctions, and political instability [2]. As a result, Nursing has undergone significant changes in recent years due to these events. currently, There are many difficulties facing Iraq's healthcare system. The most notable is the lack of capable nursing leaders to deal with the growing need for healthcare services. Healthcare system performance, care quality, and staff satisfaction are all influenced by effective nursing leadership. According to the literature, Iraqi head nurses have little involvement in decision-making and are not sufficiently trained to provide leadership to improve the nursing profession [3,4].

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Effective nursing leadership is crucial to the healthcare system, influencing work performance, quality of health care, and staff satisfaction [5]. Nursing leadership refers to the process of directing, guiding, and influencing the work of nurses and other healthcare professionals to achieve optimal patient outcomes. It requires a combination of knowledge, skills, and competencies, including clinical expertise, communication skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities [6,7]. Nursing leaders are responsible for developing strategies to improve the quality of care, enhance the working conditions of nurses and other healthcare professionals, and promote a culture of professionalism, collaboration, and continuous improvement within the nursing profession[8].

Leadership plays a critical role in the job performance of nursing staff. Effective leadership styles can motivate and inspire nurses to deliver high-quality patient care, while impaired leadership styles can lead to job burnout, dissatisfaction, and poor performance [5]. according to full range theory, there are three leadership behavioral styles transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles [9]. Transformational leadership involves focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve a common goal by creating a vision, articulating clear goals, and empowering individuals to reach their full potential [10]. Transformational leaders provide their followers with a clear vision, and they encourage them to take ownership of their work and to contribute their ideas and expertise. This leadership style can enhance nurses' job satisfaction, motivation, and overall effectiveness in delivering high-quality patient care. Transformational leaders can also provide nurses with opportunities for professional development and encourage collaboration and teamwork among healthcare professionals [11]. Transactional leadership involves focuses on the exchange between the leader and followers. the leader provides rewards or punishments to followers based on their performance.

The emphasis is on achieving specific goals and objectives, and the leader is responsible for ensuring that these goals are met [12]. Transactional leaders typically use a "carrot and stick" approach to motivate their followers. They offer rewards, such as bonuses or promotions, for achieving goals or meeting performance targets, and they may use disciplinary action, such as reprimands or demotions, for failing to meet expectations [13]. transactional leadership can be an effective way to achieve specific goals and maintain order, but it may not be the most effective leadership style for promoting long-term growth, development, and collaboration among nurses [14]. laissez-faire leadership in which leaders a hands-off approach and allow subordinates to make most of the decisions and take responsibility for their own actions [15].

This leadership style can negatively impact nurses' job performance by leading to confusion, uncertainty, and decreased motivation among nurses. Laissez-faire leaders may not provide clear goals and expectations, which can result in a lack of accountability and a decreased ability to work effectively as a team [16]. Finally, Leaders who prioritize creating a positive work environment, providing opportunities for professional development, and promoting collaboration and teamwork are more likely to enhance nurses' job performance and improve patient outcomes.

Methods

Design of the study

A descriptive correlational research design was used to determine the relationship between head nurses' leadership styles (established via staff nurses' points of view) and staff nurses' job performance (according to the head nurse's opinion). The study has been conducted between the 25th of September, 2022, and the 10th of June, 2023.

The setting of the study

This study was conducted in Najaf City Teaching hospitals (Al-Sadder Medical City, Middle Euphrates Hospital, Al-Hakim General Hospital, Al-Zahraa Teaching Hospital, Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Teaching Hospital, and National Cancer Teaching Hospital).

Sample of the Study

A non-probability sampling approach has been used (convenience sampling) of (401) nurses working in Najaf city hospitals. The sample of the study was divided into two groups, first group consisted of (350) staff nurses working in all care units of mentioned hospitals. The second group consisted of (51) head nurses working in those units.

Study instrument

Two tools were used in the study. Tool 1, the leadership questionnaire sheet, consisted of two parts. Part one included sociodemographic data of nurses, such as age, gender, marital status, level of education, years of experience, and time shift. Part two included questions about leadership styles that were developed from [17]. This was intended to assess the leadership styles of head nurses as seen by their staff nurses. It is comprised of 35 questions, categorized under three styles, transformational (20 questions), transactional (10 questions), and laissez-faire leadership (5 questions). The responses of participants were collected on a long five-rating scale ranging from "never" to "always" (1 to 5 respectively) for each statement.

The scores of each style are summed up and the total is divided by the number of the items, giving a mean score to have the mean percentage of the leadership style. tool 2: nurses' job performance evaluation sheet. consisted of two parts. Part one: included sociodemographic data of head nurses, such as age, gender, marital status, level of education, years of experience, and time shift. Part two: Staff nurses' job performance. This tool was initially developed by [18], It is composed of 14 domains to assess the overall nurse's job performance. The responses of participants were distributed on five levels of nurses' job performance ranging from "Major Improvement Needed" to "Consistently Exceeds Expectations" (1 to 5 respectively) for each level.

Results

Table (1) The Socio-demographic characteristic of head nurses (n=51) and staff nurses (n=350)

according to their demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics		head nurses		staff nurses	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Age groups (Years)	<= 25	1	1.96	137	39.14
	26 - 31	24	47.06	146	41.71
	32 - 37	9	17.65	16	4.57
	38 - 43	8	15.69	27	7.71
	44 and more	9	17.65	24	6.86
	Mean ± SD	34.73 ± 8.35		28.82 ± 7.1	
Gender	Males	35	68.63	114	32.57
	Females	16	31.37	236	67.43
Level of Education	Nursing prep.	7	13.73	61	17.43
	Diploma	13	25.49	149	42.57
	B.Sc.	27	52.94	140	40.00
	M.Sc / Ph.D	4	7.84	0	.00
Time Shift	Morning	50	98.04	297	84.86
	Evening	1	1.96	36	10.29
	Night	0	.00	17	4.86
Years of Experience	<= 5	14	27.45	234	66.86
	6 - 11	19	37.25	61	17.43
	12 - 17	8	15.69	23	6.57
	18 and more	10	19.61	32	9.14
	Mean ± SD	11.35 ± 8.22		6.14 ± 6.3	
Marital Status	Single	14	27.45	162	46.29
	Married	37	72.55	184	52.57
	Separated	0	.00	1	.29
	Divorced	0	.00	1	.29
	Widow	0	.00	2	.57
Total		200	100%	350	100%

Table (1) shows the sociodemographic data of head nurses and staff nurses, the present study revealed that (47.06%) of the nurses were in the age group (26 – 31) years. Also, most of the head nurses (68.63%) were males. Regarding Level of Education, it was clear that (52.94%) of the head nurses had a B.Sc. level of education, and (37.25%) of them had (6 – 11) years of nursing experience. For Time Shift, the majority of head nurses (98.04%) were working in the morning. Finally, more than half of the head nurses (72.55%) were married. regarding staff nurses, the present study revealed that (41.71%) of the nurses were in the age group (26 – 31) years. Also, most of the staff nurses (67.43%) were females. regarding Level of Education, it was clear that (42.57%) of the staff nurses had a Diploma level of education and (66.86%) of them had <=5 years of nursing experience. For Time Shift, the majority of staff nurses (84.86%) were working in the morning. Finally, more than half of staff nurses (52.57%) were married.

Table (2) The Mean scores of Performance Evaluation according to the opinion of the head nurses (n=350)

Overall Items		F.	%	MS	SD	RS%	Assess.
Overall Items	Major Improvement Needed	35	10.00	2.85	0.70	57	Meets Expectations
	Some Improvement Needed	80	22.86				
	Meets Expectations	130	37.14				
	Often Exceeds Expectations	79	22.57				
	Consistently Exceeds Expectations	26	7.43				

MS: Mean of Scores**;** Major Improvement Needed: **MS =<1.49;** Some Improvement Needed**: MS = 1.5-2.49;** Meets Expectations: **MS= 2.5-3.49;** Often Exceeds Expectations: **MS =3.5-4.49;** Consistently Exceeds Expectations: **MS ≥ 4.5; RS:** relative sufficiency percentage.

Table (2) shows the assessment (mean of scores) of job performance Evaluation according to the opinion of the head nurses; it reveals the assessment of overall items (Meets Expectations). See Figure (1)
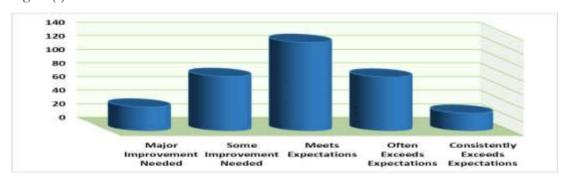

Figure (1) Descriptive statistics of Performance Evaluation according to the opinion of the head nurses (n=350)

Table (3) The Mean scores of overall items of leadership styles according to the opinion of the staff nurses (n=51)

Items		Freq.	%	MS	SD	RS%	Assess.
Transformational	Never	2	3.92	2.31	0.32	77	Sometime
	Sometime	17	33.33				
	Always	32	62.75				
Transactional	Never	2	3.92	2.17	0.22	72	Sometime
	Sometime	40	78.43				
	Always	9	17.65				
Laissez-faire	Never	0	.00	2.23	0.27	74	Sometime
	Sometime	34	66.67				
	Always	17	33.33				

MS: Mean of Scores; Never: **MS =<1.66;** Sometime: **MS = 1.67-2.33;** Always: **MS ≥ 2.34.**

Table (3) shows leadership styles used by the heads of nurses. As illustrated from the table, the transformational score highly agreed of staff nurses (MS= 2.31) followed by the Laissez-faire leadership style (MS= 2.23). Whereas the Transactional leadership style is the lowest leadership style used by head nurses (MS= 2.17).

Table (4) Relationship between leadership style scores and staff Performance Evaluation scores using Pearson correlation statistical test

Scales		Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership	Laissez-faire leadership	Leadership styles	Job Performance (n=350)
Transformational leadership (n=51)	Corr.		0.783	-.119	0.426**	0.426**
	Sig.			0.407	0.002	0.002
Transactional leadership (n=51)	Corr.	0.783		0.163	0.892**	0.295*
	Sig.			0.253		0.035
Laissez-faire leadership (n=51)	Corr.	-.119	0.163		0.465**	-0.514**
	Sig.	0.407	0.253		0.001	
Leadership Styles (n=51)	Corr.	0.426**	0.892**	0.465**		0.608*
	Sig.	0.002		0.001		0.003

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level   **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Discussion

Leadership plays a critical role in the job performance of nursing staff. Effective leadership can motivate and inspire nurses to deliver high-quality patient care, while poor leadership can lead to job burnout, dissatisfaction, and poor performance. Nurses are often on the front lines of patient care, and their job performance is crucial to achieving positive patient outcomes. Effective leadership styles can provide the nursing staff with the resources, support, and direction they need to achieve their jobs effectively and efficiently. A good head of nurses can help create a positive work environment that encourages collaboration, communication, and teamwork, leading to improved job satisfaction and better performance.

On the other hand, impaired leadership styles can have a negative influence on nurses' job performance. When head nurses fail to provide support, resources, or clear direction, nurses may struggle to fulfill their job expectations. This can lead to feelings of stress, burnout, and frustration,

all of which can negatively impact job performance. in summary, the relationship between leadership and nurses' job performance is crucial, and effective leadership can have a significant effect on the quality of care provided to patients by nurses. This study is one of the very few studies that dealt with this issue and explored the leadership effect of head nurses on nursing staff working in health care services in Iraq. The results indicate that leadership styles, behaviors, and outcomes described by full-range leadership theory, were demonstrated by the head of nurses in the targeted institutions. However, regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of head nurses, Table (1) shows that (47.06%) of head nurses were in the age group (26 – 31) years. Also (68.63%) most of the head nurses were males. Regarding the level of education, it was clear that (52.94%) of the head nurses had a B.Sc. level of education, and (37.25%) of them had (6 – 11) years of nursing experience, For Time Shift, the majority of head nurses (98.04%) were working at morning. Finally, more than half of the head nurses (72.55%) were married. regarding Socio-demographic characteristics of staff nurses, also Table (1) shows that (41.71%) of the nurses were in the age group (26 – 31) years. Also (67.43%) most of the staff nurses were females. regarding Level of Education, it was clear that (42.57%) of the staff nurses had a Diploma level of education and (66.86%) of them had <=5 years of nursing experience. For Time Shift, the majority of staff nurses (84.86%) were working at the morning. Finally, more than half of staff nurses (52.57%) were married. Regarding nurses' job performance, Table (2) indicated that total mean score of performance among nursing staff according to the opinion of the head nurses was meets expectations, This result is somewhat close to what was concluded in a study conducted by [19] found that nurses had moderate level of job performance. These results also agree with a study conducted by [20], which indicates that nurses' performance was fair regarding life-threatening conditions.

according to the current study, Table (3) demonstrated that the head of nurses fairly used the transformational leadership style followed by laissez-faire leadership and finally transactional. outcomes of The current study were consistent with a study conducted by [21] which found that nurses' supervisors fairly used transformational leadership style more than other styles. In the same context, [22] found that nurses perceive that transformational leadership styles are demonstrated by nurse managers more than other leadership styles.

Conclusion

The results of the current study concluded that the performance of the nursing staff was meets expectations. and the leadership style of head nurses was relatively transformational leadership style, and there was a positive and significant relationship between the leadership style of head nurses with the job performance of the nursing staff.

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