Impact of leadership development package on leadership competencies of undergraduate nursing students and head nurses

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is important in every sphere of activity, it is likely to be particularly crucial issue for nursing and midwifery at the beginning of the 21st century as nurses and midwives, along with other health professionals, find themselves faced with a climate of ongoing change. The main aim of the study was to find the impact of a leadership development package (LDP) on leadership competencies of undergraduate nursing students and head nurses working in the clinical settings as reported by the participants and as observed by others. Secondary aim was to identify the organizational climate that was present in the institution and to find the readiness and commitment of key management personnel towards the implementation of leadership development package in the institution. Finally it was also to determine the satisfaction of participants with the leadership development package.

The study involved a mixed methods approach, starting with a quantitative method and finally concluding with qualitative method. As the main purpose of the study was to find the impact of LDP on leadership competencies of undergraduate nursing students, and the head nurses; a quasi experimental, pretest- multiple post tests control group design was utilized for the study to collect the quantitative data. A descriptive design was used to find the organizational climate and to find the satisfaction of participants with LDP and views of key organizational personnel regarding the use of LDP.

Two leading and prominent hospitals and colleges of nursing in private sector at Ernakulam were selected as per the convenience. Thirty students of the fourth year BSc Nursing who satisfied the inclusion criteria of Lisie College of Nursing and Medical Trust College of Nursing were the participants for the study in the control and experimental group I respectively. Similarly, thirty head nurses who satisfied the inclusion criteria of Lisie hospital and Lourdes Hospital were the participants for the study in the control and experimental group II respectively. All participants of one institution acted as the control group. All participants in the experimental group of undergraduate nursing students and head nurses who were willing to attend the focus group discussion were included for the focus group discussion to find the satisfaction with LDP. The key organizational leaders of Lourdes Hospital and Medical Trust College of Nursing who were willing to be part of the study were selected as
participants for the interview regarding the organizational commitment and readiness to adopt LDP.

Tools for collecting quantitative data included: Demographic information tool, Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) - Self and Observer by Kouzes and Posner, and the Organizational Climate Rating Scale. Tools used for qualitative data collection were the focus group discussion format with leading question and Organizational Commitment and Readiness Interview Schedule. Validity and Reliability of the tools were ensured before the commencement of the data collection process. The LDP was modeled on Kouzes and Posner five exemplary leadership practices which were as follows: Model the Way (MTW), Inspire a Shared Vision (ISV), Challenge the Process (CTP), Enable Others to Act (EOA) and Encourage the Heart (ETH).

Results of the study revealed that the mean difference for all leadership practice scores measured by the 360-degree Leadership Practices Inventory showed a statistically significant increase by the end of the program, when measured against the scores at the beginning of the program among participants in the experimental group than those in the control group. This indicates a positive change in leadership practices, as measured by the self and observers which was found to be significant at 0.001 level.

Thirty three of the head nurse viewed the organizational climate to be poor for leadership and leadership development, where as twenty six of them found the climate to be satisfactory and only one person rated the organizational climate to be good. Of the sixty undergraduate nursing students, thirty six of them found the organizational climate to be poor and the remaining twenty four of them viewed it as satisfactory. From the six key management personnel from both hospital and college where the intervention was administered, four of them viewed the organizational climate to be good and the remaining two found it to be satisfactory towards leadership and leadership development.

The focus group discussion revealed that the participants were highly satisfied with the LDP and it helped them to improve their leadership practices. The key management personnel found the LDP to be beneficial in improving the leadership practices of the participants and were willing to use it in their institution.

**KEY WORDS:** Nursing Leadership, Leadership Development, Exemplary Leadership Practices, Organizational Climate, Readiness and Commitment for change