Original Article

Leading Nursing for Students who Want to Become a Manager Nurse: A Qualitative Approach

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Abstract

Background: Leader is described as "an individual who unites organization members around the agreed views and principles, leads the masses towards an objective or motivate others, who are normally unaware of, towards certain objectives by influencing them.

Objective: This research was conducted in order to determine the opinions of the students about being a leading nurse who want to become manager nurse.

Methodology: This research was conducted with 12 students who are continuing their studies in 4th grade of nursing management course and have accepted to participate in the research. The thoughts and feelings of students who want to become manager nurse about the leader nursing is narrated via a qualitative method. With the use of a semi-structured interview form, the data was obtained within 25-30 minutes via a face-to-face interview. The method of content analysis was used for the evaluation of the data and 8 themes were determined as a result of the codings that were made.

Results: As a result; it was identified that dream leader nurse of the students who thought of becoming managers should have effective communication skills, join scientific activities, think critically during crisis, be a member of professional organizations/associations, have the ability to direct employees and to motivate them, use technology, demonstrate ethical behaviors and be a role model.

Conclusions: In light of these results, there are recommended in during university education; seminars, panels and/or symposiums should be held for the students who think of becoming managers in order to earn them leader nurse qualities and opportunities to meet leader nurses who can be taken as role models should be offered to these students and should be guided for various certificate programs so that they can use technology more effectively.

Key words: Manager Nurse, Student, Leader Nurse, Qualitative Study.

Introduction

Leader is described as "an individual who unites organization members around the agreed views and principles, leads the masses towards an objective or motivate others, who are normally unaware of, towards certain objectives by influencing them (Camlıbel et al. 2013). Leadership is a process and leaders are those who initiate, direct, guide and change this process when necessary. A leader is expected to make right decisions, to motivate people towards future objectives, to have some charisma, to be open to communication, to be able to influence others, to be open to changes and innovations, to continuously be equipped with knowledge and to use and to guide that knowledge (Onen & Kanaryan, 2015; Bektas, 2016; İntepeler & Karani Baris, 2018).

Health services are directly offered to people and are one of the areas that are difficult and complicated to be managed. However, it is members of nursing profession who -as a part of their powers, tasks and responsibilities- primarily stay in touch with those receiving health services (Ozturk, Bahcecik & Gurdogan, 2012; Ardahan & Konal, 2017). In this sense, it is emphasized that it is only through a powerful management of nursing services and a strong nursing leadership that nurses can be moved towards correct and common objectives and realize professional ethical principles in the most correct manner so that they can provide a service of high quality (Herdman, 2012). To this end; nurse manager –who takes nurses towards objectives, stimulates them with a definite plan by organizing them, motivates them, cares about expectations of subordinates when a decision is made and management-practices are performed, enhances loyalty through emotional bonds, trusts in and empathizes with staffs- should combine views, wishes and needs of all the health professionals and nursing students under a common point (Goktepe & Baykal, 2006; Amestoy et al. 2009; Ozturk, Bahcecik & Gurdogan, 2012; Ardahan & Konal, 2017; Anderson, 2018; Silva Araujo & Figueiredo, 2019). Besides, leaders in the field should play an active role in teaching activities of all students and realize these processes by planning, sharing and supporting them with students and include the students in these processes in terms of leadership (Ozkan Ozdemir, Akın & Durna, 2015). Therefore, it is thought that it is important for students, being future of the profession and future nurses, to be trained by nurse managers in relation with leadership behaviors during clinical practices and the leadership and leadership behaviors expected from and demonstrated by nurse managers will be guiding in their professional development.

Aims of the Study: This research was conducted in order to determine the opinions of the students about being a leading nurse who want to become manager nurse.

Methodology

Study Design

The study was planned as a qualitative study based on descriptive data analysis.

Setting and Sample

The population of the study was composed of 4th grade students studing Management in Nursing Course at School of Health Sciences, İstanbul Gelisim University during 2018-2019 academic year whereas the sample of the study was consisted of 12 students who volunteered to participated in the study and wanted to be a nurse manager as a part of their future career planning.

Data Collection

The data were collected through a semi-structured interview form designed to explore leader nurses' characteristics according to the literature (Goktepe & Baykal, 2006; Duygulu & Kubilay, 2008; Amestoy et al., 2009; Camlıbel et al., 2013; Bektas, 2016; Anderson, 2018). The first part of the form included information on students' age, sex, school completed, internship-clinics, average academic grades and membership to professional associations. The other part included three open ended and non-guiding questions covering general issues in order to determine the characteristics leader nurses should have. These open ended questions are as follows: *'What are the qualities that your dream nurse manager should have? 'What is the value added by these qualities to nurse managers?' 'What kind of problems may occur if these qualities lack?'.* Interviews were conducted whenever student nurses were present at the school during non-class hours between the 25th of February and the 8th of March, 2019. The interviews were conducted lasting averagely 25-30 minutes in a room assigned to the researcher so that they could safely be made. During the interviews, student statements were audio-recorded and notes were taken when necessary. Students were also requested to convey their feelings and views in a written manner so that they could express their emotions better.

Ethical Consideration

Ethics committee approval was gained from the Ethics Committee of Non-Interventional Clinical Studies of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University. Written official permissions were also gained from the management of the university. Participants gave their oral and written informed consents and were informed that audio-recording device would be

used and were assured of confidentiality of audio-recording.

Data Analysis

Audio-recording of all interviews and written student statements were manually transcribed verbatim. Data were coded using NVivo8 program. Codes were classified and eight different themes of leadership that a nurse should have were established as follows: **effective communication, participation in scientific activities, critical thinking, joining a professional association, providing motivation, ability to use technology, ethical behavior and being role model**.

Research Limitations

The main limitation included views of the 12 students because the study was done as a qualitative study and the findings were not generalized.

Results

The number of the female and male participants was equal, most of them graduated from Anatolian/Super High Schools, mostly did internship at internal diseases department and pediatric department, half of them were willing to study nursing and became members of professional associations and had an average academic achievement of 2.79.

Theme: Effective communication: The participating students stressed that the most striking characteristic of leader nurses was their ability to communicate and thus they would play a key role in order to prevent conflicts and realize communication among nurses but on the other hand, there would be problems among nurse manager and other nurses in the organization in case of poor communication skills.

> *Manager should have a good communication with nurses and should not create an atmosphere causing quarrels and misunderstandings (21y, F, Vocational Health School graduate).*

> *Communication is a must for nurse managers. Insufficient communication in a nurse manager leads to troublesome work setting among coworkers (22y, M, Anatolian/ Super High School graduate).*

Theme: Participation in scientific activities: The students emphasized that it is very important for leader nurses to follow modern innovations so that they could lessen work burden thanks to these innovations, offer a better health care to patients, motivate staff but on the other hand if they did not participate in scientific activities, nurse manager's competence and qualifications would be questioned.

> *Since field of health develops constantly, nurse managers should have a command of scientific field. If not, managers are thought to be incompetent (30y, M, High School graduate).*

> *I believe that researching and participating in a scientific activity in a positive manner will motivate both nurse managers and organization staff (21y, F, Vocational Health School graduate).*

> *Since nursing is a science influenced by scientific advancements and innovations, nurse managers should follow national and international congresses, seminars and publications (21y, F, Anatolian/ Super High School graduate).*

Theme: Critical thinking: The students told that ability to think critically is the most important component to become a leader nurse and a leader nurse can make quick and correct decisions thanks to critical thinking skills used to solve problems at crisis moments.

> *One of the essential characteristics of a leader nurse is the ability to think critically. Correct decisions save lives under stress and risk (21y, M, Vocational Health School graduate).*

> *In order to solve the existing problems at crisis moments, leader nurse should handle problems using critical thinking (30y, M, High School graduate).*

Theme: Joining a professional association (Membership for Associations): The students told that leader nurses should definitely become a member of professional associations; which will contribute to development of the nursing profession. It is only through becoming a member of associations that nurses can know the latest

nursing professional developments and legal rights better.

> *Leader nurse should join professional associations, participate in activities and contribute to the nursing profession (22y, F, Anatolian/ Super High School graduate).*

> *Leader nurses themselves should be member of associations and encourage coworkers to join professional associations. To bring nursing profession to the best point, they should move together (24y, M, High School graduate).*

Theme: Providing motivation: The students stated that if leader nurses try to be a source of motivation; quality of patient care will increase, professional burnout will decrease, tasks assigned will completely and quickly be realized and sense of responsibility will be enhanced more.

> *Providing motivation will make tasks realized completely; as a result of which productivity will be enhanced (22y, F, High School graduate).*

> *Such methods as awarding, pay rise, promotion, presents, oral motivation should be used in order to provide employee-motivation by leader nurses (30y, M, High School graduate).*

Theme: Ability to use technology: The students told that it is necessary for leader nurses to follow today's technological knowledge and to have that knowledge shared with the team members so that safer practices of patient care can be realized and health records can be kept more regularly in order to reduce work burden and waste of time among nurses.

> *Today, it is necessary that leader nurses should know technology very well in order not to fall behind today's technological advancements and to facilitate the work that is done and share the knowledge they learn with organization staff. (21y, M, Vocational Health School graduate).*

> *Since many different programs, interfaces, medical devices etc. are used at hospitals; leader nurses should have the ability to use them (24y, F, High School graduate).*

> *I am of the opinion that leader nurses should use such devices as computers, telephones, tablets etc very well and realize communication using different methods (22y, M, Anatolian/ Super High School graduate).*

Theme: Ethical behavior: The students pointed out that leader nurses should demonstrate ethical behaviors towards other health care personnel, be honest, reliable, fair, hardworking, frank, and philanthropic and behave without discriminating among sexes.

> *First objective of all the members of the health care team is not to harm patients but to help them recover from illness. Basic objective of leader nurses should be to teach this (21y, F, Anatolian/ Super High School graduate).*

> *Leader nurses' behaviors of non-discrimination, honesty and justice should be improved (22y, M, High School graduate).*

> *Leader nurses should always approach other employees of the organization with love and respect. Leader nurses should be very sensitive in ethical issues (22y, M, Vocational Health School graduate).*

Theme: Being a role model: The students stated that leader nurses should be role model for all employees and intern students during clinical practices with their acts, behaviors, professional ethics and professional skills.

> *Leader nurses, who are role models, should be taken as example by subordinates and therefore performance and quality in patient care is enhanced (30y, M, High School graduate).*

> *Leader nurses should support intern students during clinical practices and help them cope with their fears and anxieties and share knowledge, skills, tasks, authority and responsibilities with these students (21y, F, Anatolian/ Super High School graduate).*

> *Leader nurses themselves should first show behaviors expected from team members*

(22y, F, Vocational Health School graduate).

Discussion

It is essential for leader nurses to improve their leadership abilities, act as a leader both for other nurses in the organization and future nurse candidates and be open to development by taking their wishes into consideration so that nursing profession can meet the current demands and achieve the future visions. In this sense; the current study undertaken to identify views of the nursing students who wanted to be nurse managers in the future explored eight common themes -effective communication, participation in scientific activities, critical thinking, joining a professional association, providing motivation, ability to use technology, ethical behavior and being role model- and these themes were discussed in line with the literature.

Theme: Effective communication: Nurse managers, one of the most significant components of health services, need to co-work with other members of the team and students, who are the future members of the nursing profession through a strong communication (Yalcın, Tetik & Acıkgoz, 2010). In a study done by Duygulu and Kubilay, 46.7% of the participants gave the answer "communicating effectively" to the question *'What are the first three most important qualifications that good nurse managers should have?'* and according to these participants "communicating effectively" was the second most important qualification (Duygulu & Kubilay, 2008). In the study of Yigit done to determine leadership behaviors of nurse managers, it was found that subordinates expected from their leaders good communication skills (Yigit, 2000). In the current study, too, it was found that students told that nurses in leader position should be solution-oriented and have high communication skills.

Theme: Participation in scientific activities: As in other professions, it is necessary in nursing profession, too that nurses in leader position should follow scientific innovations and use new information and knowledge both in clinical practice and education processes of intern nursing students at clinics (Ozturk Copur, Kuru & Canbolat Seyman, 2015). In a qualitative study done by Amestoy et al. (2009); participants told that leaders

of nurses should have scientific knowledge and participate in scientific activities (Amestoy et al. 2009). In the study of Johnson and Smith; it was concluded that nurses, who were in executive positions, should develop their scientific backgrounds (Johnson & Smith, 2018). The study of Reilley, Harper and Smith (2016) concluded that leaders, who worked in field, should follow scientific knowledge and keep their knowledge updated (Reilley, Harper & Smith, 2016). The participants of the current study, too, stated that managers, who are in executive positions and leader executives, should have a strong basis.

Theme: Critical thinking: Ability to think critically is very important for nursing profession, which is directly related to human health and managers and leader nurses should have this ability (Martin, 2002; Cruz & Cerullo, 2010). In the studies of Erkus and Bahcecik (2015) and Baran and Balcı (2017), average critical thinking score of nurse managers was lower while in the study of Wangensteen et al. (2010) it was at a moderate level (Wangensteen et al. 2010; Erkus & Bahcecik, 2015; Baran & Balcı, 2017). Some other studies, too, argued that leaders should think critically (Amestoy et al. 2009; Ardahan & Konal, 2017). In the current study, too, the students told that nurse leaders should have the ability to think critically.

Theme: Joining a professional association (Membership for Associations): Becoming a member of an association, which is a necessity for professionalism, is very important for nursing profession and it is only leaders who can create a strong membership of an association (Kucukoglu et al. 2014). The studies of Korkmaz and Gorgulu (2010) and Adıguzel, Tanrıverdi and Ozkan (2011) suggested that level of joining associations by nurses was quite low (Korkmaz & Gorgulu, 2010; Adıguzel, Tanrıverdi & Ozkan, 2011). In the qualitative study of Ozluk and Sur (2017), nurse managers answered that *"Nursing profession should urgently join associations and be united. Being united under an umbrella is crucial in terms of professionalism."* (Ozluk & Sur, 2017). In the current study, too, students, wanting to be nurse managers, emphasized that they expected a strong behavior to join professional associations from nurses in leader positions.

Theme: Providing motivation: Basic objective in nursing services and management is to provide customers with a higher level of health care service. It is pointed out that it is important for nurse leaders to encourage health staff towards this direction and to motivate them to this end. The study of İnfal and Bodur (2011) identified that among the most valued motivations was to be appreciated by managers (İnfal & Bodur, 2011). In the study of Karakaya and Ay (2007) done with nurses, too, it was suggested that one of the most important motivation factors was *"managers' appreciating the work done"* (Karakaya & Ay, 2007). In the study of Vilma and Egle (2007), it was concluded that nurse leaders' solving problems of the staff motivated them (Vilma & Egle, 2007). In the current study, too, students made similar statements and these statements were in line with literature.

Theme: Ability to use technology: With today's advancements in computers and informatics, there have been significant developments and changes in health disciplines as well as nursing profession and it is suggested that nurses in leader positions should keep pace with these changes (Softa, Akduran & Akyazı, 2014). In studies undertaken to explore nurses' computer-technologies use rate; it was by 20% in the study of Erdemir et al., by 80% in the study of Kaya et al., by 14% in the study of Basar et al., 36.3% in the study of Softa, Akduran and Akyazı and by 32.9% in the study of Kose (Kaya et al., 2008; Basar et al., 2008; Kose, 2012; Softa, Akduran & Akyazı, 2014). When these rates were examined, it was evident that nurses' level to use technology was poor. In the current study, too, students stated that nurses in leader position should use technology and follow the advancements.

Theme: Ethical behavior: In health disciplines; nurses -getting in contact with patients and constituting the most important component of health care- may have to face ethical problems that they mostly have difficulty in solving due to excessive roles and responsibilities. To solve these problems, both nurses and managers in leader positions should have a high level of ethical sensitivities (Bednarski, 2009; Kahriman & Yesilcicek Calik, 2017). In the study of Vilma and Egle (2007), it was found that nurse leaders' non-ethical behaviors demotivated staff (Vilma & Egle, 2007). Likewise, in the study of Bjarnason and

LaSala (2011) it was concluded that managers' ethical behaviors would directly influence quality of patient care produced by nurses and safe work setting (Bjarnason & LaSala, 2011). In the current study, too, students told that leader nurses' ethical behaviors would enhance staff motivation, build a safe work environment and may affect quality of patient care directly.

Theme: Being a role model: Nurses in leader positions should be a role model both in their practices and behaviors (Gallagher & Tschudin, 2010).   In particular; clinically professional approaches and practices of leader nurses -included in education process of students- affect clinical functioning, student success and status of the profession directly (Unsal et al., 2002).   In the study of Ryan and Mc Allister (2018); it was identified that nurses in leader positions helped students adapt into clinics, encouraged them to ask questions, regarded them as their coworkers and tried to teach them in that way (Ryan & McAllister, 2018). In another study, it was found that positive role models affected student performance directly (Nouri et al., 2014).   In the current study, too, students emphasized that nurses in leader positions should act as a role model.

Conclusions

As a conclusion; it was identified that dream leader nurse of the students who thought of becoming managers should have effective communication skills, join scientific activities, think critically during crisis, be a member of professional organizations/associations, have the ability to direct employees and to motivate them, use technology, demonstrate ethical behaviors and be a role model. In light of these results, the followings are recommended:

• During university education; seminars, panels and/or symposiums should be held for the students who think of becoming managers in order to earn them leader nurse qualities and opportunities to meet leader nurses who can be taken as role models should be offered to these students.

• During university education, these students should be encouraged to research and to join congresses and/or symposiums on nursing profession and to join professional associations,

• These students should be guided for various certificate programs (computer use, medical device use etc.) so that they can use technology more effectively.

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