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The impact of leadership styles and empowerment on nurse's organizational commitment in acute health care settings: A correlational study

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Background & Aim: The current challenges facing healthcare systems in relation to the shortages of health professionals necessitate that managers and leaders learn from the different leadership styles and staff empowerment strategies to create a work environment that encourages nursing staff commitment to their work and organization. The purpose of this study is to measure the effects of nurse's perception of their manager's leadership style and psychological empowerment on their organizational commitment in acute care units in National Guard Health Affairs, Riyadh City, Saudi Arabia.

Methods: Using validated survey instruments, we obtained data from staff nurses employed by the King bin Abulaziz Medical Centre (KAMC), NGHHA. Hard copy questionnaires were distributed to 350 randomly selected nurses, of which 332 were completed resulting in a response rate of 95%. The three instruments used to obtain the data were: (1) The 1997 Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), formulated by Bass and Avolio, (2) the 1995 psychological empowerment scale developed by Spreitzer and (3) the 1997 three-component model of employee commitment developed by Meyer and Allen. Our research design was based on a theoretical model that conceptually links leadership, empowerment and organizational commitment. The SPSS program version 19 was employed to perform the descriptive and inferential statistics including correlation and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

Results: The overall results showed that most nurses perceived their immediate nursing managers as not displaying the ideal level of Transformational Leadership (TFL) behaviors. The nurse's commitment appears to be negatively correlated with TFL style and perceived psychological empowerment whereas commitment is positively correlated with Transactional Leadership (TAL) style. Stepwise regression analysis showed that nurse's commitment is significantly correlated with their nationalities by region: North American (p -value=0.001) and Middle Eastern (p -value=0.027). The other important predictors of nurse's commitment were: TAL (p -value=0.027), Laissez-faire Leadership (LFL) (p -value=0.012) and autonomy (p -value=0.016). The linear combination of these predictors explains 20% of the variability of the nurses' commitment.

Conclusion: The study findings suggest that leadership styles and employee empowerment play an instrumental role in promoting organizational commitment of nurses working in acute health care settings, at least in the Saudi Arabian context.

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