

Critical Evaluation of the Influence of Leader Personality and Culture on Staff Nurse Retention

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Abstract

Nurse turnover is associated with financial losses to health care organizations and negative influence on staff morale and the delivery of quality service. Increasing nurse retention is, therefore, important in enhancing performance of healthcare organizations and the provision of quality health service. Traditional approaches used to increase nurse retention include improved remuneration and enhanced working conditions. However the question on the influence of leadership personality and culture on nurse retention is not fully understood. The objective of this study was to evaluate the influence of leadership personality and culture on nurse retention. The study involved a qualitative case study assessment of 70 case studies obtained from four different online databases. The outcome of the study indicated that leadership culture significantly ($p=0.037$) influence nurse retention. It was observed that leadership culture account for 18.3% of nurse retention level. Leadership cultures such as leadership-as-coordination and leadership by example was shown to have significantly higher positive influence on nurse retention ($p=0.022$ and $p=0.041$ respectively) compared to the influence of the culture of leadership-as-dominance. The study recommends that adoption of leadership-as-coordination and leadership by example as a means of increasing nurses' retention.

Keywords: Nurse retention, Leadership personalities, Leadership culture, Turnover

1 Introduction

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High nurse turnover causes financial losses to health care organizations [1]. It is reported that the cost of each nurse turnover is as high as \$64, 0000 [2]. Nurse turnover is also indicated to have a negative influence on staff morale and the delivery of quality service [1]. A study by [3] indicated that health care administrators consider nurse retention as key factor that determines organizational success and, have put in place various efforts towards increasing staff retention as a means of cutting costs and enhancing performance. The approaches commonly used to increase nurse retention include improved remuneration and enhanced working conditions [4]. However, various studies have suggested that leader personality and culture also influence staff retention [2]. Leadership personality is suggested to determine the level of trust that organization's employees have in the leadership and hence determine the organization and employee performance and satisfaction [5]. Leader personality also affects the level of communication and interaction that the employees have with the management [6]. A study by [7] suggested that leader personality encourages communication and promotes trust among employees leading to high retention. The influence of leadership culture on the health organization's workforce is the leading determinant of employee satisfaction and success of the organization [8]. It is indicated that various aspects of leadership culture such as the level of leadership employee orientation, uncertainty avoidance, and assertiveness influence organization's employee retention by determining the nature of the relationship that the workforce has with the management and the level of job satisfaction [9].

Despite highlighted importance of leader personality and culture affect in influencing employee retention, little research attention has been directed towards the assessment of the extent to which leader personality and culture affect nurse retention in health care organization. This study, therefore, examined selected available data with an aim of establishing how leader personality and culture influence nurse retention among the health care facilities. The study hypothesized that nurse retention is influenced by leader personality and culture. The study evaluated this hypothesis based on two main objectives. The first objective was to establish the documented types of leader personality and cultures in health care sector. The second objective was to determine how the identified leader personality and culture influence nurse retention. Based on the research findings, the study also provided recommendations that are geared towards the development of leadership approach that promotes health care staff retention.

This research provides vital information on the best practice in health care administration that is geared towards increased nurse retention by highlighting the strategies that are effective in boosting nurse retention in the health care sector. Improved nurse retention will be beneficial to the health care organizations by eliminating the costs that would have been incurred through the nurse replacement efforts. The strategies suggested will contribute towards improved working experience for nurses through enhanced leadership approach. The improved

working environment is expected to enhance the nurse work efficiency resulting in improved performance and better service delivery to the community.

2 Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative methodological approach based on case study qualitative design. The study considered the use of case study qualitative design since the approach facilitates the evaluation of the subject of research based on different scenarios and aid in developing detailed analysis and comprehensive conclusions and recommendations on a given subject [10]. Therefore, case study design is well suited for this research since the study used the existing data to examine the influence of leader personality and culture on nurse retention. The study used data from various online data sources. The different data sources were considered as individual case studies. The inclusion of online data source in the study was on the basis of data quality as determined by the mode of primary data collection and the ratings of the database as determined by the reviews. Online databases containing primary data collected through well-designed randomized controlled designs were considered. Based on the inclusion criteria above, four different online databases were purposefully selected. The data from the selected databases was then retrieved using purposive sampling approach by using the study's research objectives as guide. The study controlled the possible occurrence of researcher's bias during the selection of the case studies by ensuring that each selection was solely based on quality of the data and the research objectives. From each of the four identified online databases, the study considered 15 different case studies resulting in a total of 70 case studies based on the recommendation by Creswell [11]. The study considered the level of nurse retention, as the dependent variable while the independent variables included the leader personality, leadership communication, interaction with employees and level of motivation. This study did not require the researcher to obtain an informed consent since the research involved the use of existing data [12]. The study, however, ensured that ethical standards were upheld by fully acknowledging the data origin and the adherence to the rules associated with the individual data sources selected for the study.

3 Data Collection

The data used to evaluate the study's research questions were collected purposively. The collection of data was executed by first identifying the appropriate data source based on the inclusion criteria described above, then the data from the different databases was retrieved using keywords such as nursing leaders, leader culture, nurse retention, and causes of nursing turnover. The retrieved data was then selected purposively based on the research questions. The

following are the online databases considered by the study: One of the databases considered is the Nurses Association Website that contains data concerning the issues of interest to 3.4 million registered nurses in the US. The database contains data on management policy and reviews. The second database that was considered is the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality that contains data compiled in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ProQuest website is the third database considered by the study. The database is an established data source containing varied information on the health care management. The fourth database is the Emerald database that contains various research data on nursing managers.

3.1 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved rigorous organization of the data with an aim of establishing a pattern that explains the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable of the study. The organized data was synthesized by merging the data with the research questions. The data that was obtained from the different identified data sources was sorted to ensure that each dataset was complete. The sorted data was then assigned to the different groups based on the different research objectives. The analysis of the data was carried out based on descriptive statistics such as percentages and means and through ANOVA. Frequencies were used to describe the data on the different types of leader personality in health care organizations and the different leader culture in health care organizations. The data on nurse retention status in the identified health organizations was analyzed based mean percentages, while the data on the influence of leader personality and culture on the level of nurse retention was analyzed using ANOVA test. The influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable was determined at level of significance of 0.05 using Bonferroni test using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 23.

4 Results

From the 70 cases studies that were considered by the study, 48 of them described the influence of leadership culture on nurse retention while 22 described how leadership personality influence the level of nurse retention. The case studies that were considered were between the year 2005 and 2014. The use of 2015-2016 cases was limited by the incompleteness of the data during the time of data retrieval.

Leadership personalities and culture in healthcare organizations

The different leadership personalities and cultures were identified based on the nurse reports on the interaction they have with the leaders in their respective health care organizations. The leadership culture of leadership as dominance was

described by feature such as group decision-making, employee focused leadership approach and resource sharing. Leadership by example was identified based on elements such as leaders making first move or leaders being the first to implement resolutions. The leadership as dominance culture was identified based on features such as exercising excess use of power over lower-ranked employees and unilateral decision making. The Pro-self personalities was identified based on descriptions such as egoistic selfish, self-centeredness and insecure while the pro-social personalities was identified based on description such as approachable, listening and accommodating.

The results indicated that leadership culture of leadership-as-dominance is significantly less frequent ($p=0.037$, 28%) in the healthcare organization compared to leadership-as-coordination that was reported to be significantly highly frequent (59%, $p=0.002$). However the frequency of leadership-as-dominance and leadership by example (17%) were not significantly different. The study also indicated that pro-social leadership personalities are significantly more frequent (65%, $p=0.032$) among leaders in healthcare organizations compared to the pro-self personalities (31%) as indicated in table 1 below.

Table 1: The percentage frequency of identified leadership personalities and cultures among healthcare organization leaders

Leadership Culture	% Reporting Frequency
Leadership-as-dominance	28b
Leadership-as-coordination	59a
Leadership by example	17b
Leadership personalities	
Pro-social personalities	65a
Pro-self personalities	31b

Trend in nurse retention between 2005 and 2014

The study also analyzed the case study data to determine the nurse retention trends between 2005 and 2104. The study utilized the data on the number of available nurses at beginning of each study period interval. Study results showed sharp decrease in percentage nurse retention between the year 2008 (79 %) and 2011 (66 %) followed by slight increase in between 2011 to 2014 (67%) as indicated in figure 1 below.

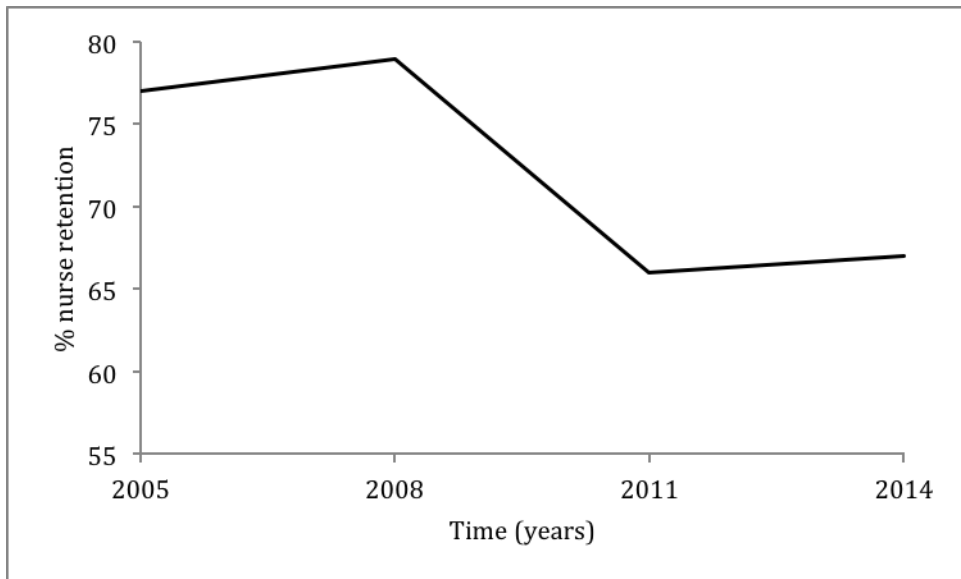


Figure 1: Trend in nurse retention percentage between 2005 and 2014

Influence of leadership personality and culture on nurse retention

The determination of the influence of leadership personality and culture on nurse retention was carried out using Two-way Anova. The study results indicated that leadership culture has significant influence ($p= 0.037$) on nurse retention levels. The outcome presented in Table 2 showed that leadership culture account for up to 18.3% of nurse retention levels. However, the study indicated the leadership personalities do not significantly influence nurse retention levels. It was also shown that the interaction between the leadership personalities and leadership culture result in a significant influence in the nurse retention levels as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The influence of leadership culture and leadership personalities on nurse retention levels

Source	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected model	5	8.345	0	0.423
Culture	2	8.003	0.037	0.183
Personality	1	0.302	0.518	0.021
Culture*Personality	2	11.438	0.616	0.047

Pairwise comparison of the influence of various leadership cultures on the nurse retention level indicated that culture of leadership-as-coordination has

significantly higher positive influence than leadership as dominance (mean difference 6.207, $p=0.022$). The study also indicated that the culture of leadership by example has a significantly higher positive influence on nurse retention compared to dominance (mean difference 5.793, $p=0.041$). However no significant difference was observed between the influence of leadership by example and leadership-as-coordination as indicated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Pairwise comparison of the influence of various leadership cultures on the nurse retention level

Dependent variable: Symptom level

		Mean difference	Std error	Sig.
Leadership-as-dominance	Leadership-as-coordination	-6.207	2.011	0.022
	Leadership by example	-5.793	2.011	0.041
Leadership-as-coordination	Leadership-as-dominance	6.207	2.011	0.022
	Leadership by example	1.355	2.011	1.002
Leadership by example	Leadership-as-coordination	-1.355	2.011	1.002
	Leadership-as-dominance	5.793	2.011	0.041

5 Discussion

This study was carried out to test the hypothesis that nurse retention is influenced by leader personality and culture. The study first sought to determine the existing nurse retention level. The outcome of the study indicated that there is a general decline in the nurse retention between 2005 and 2014. The study also evaluated the various leadership personalities and culture. The study identified leadership by example, leadership-as-coordination and leadership-as-dominance as the three major leadership cultures depicted by the leaders in the healthcare sector. The study also identified pro-self personalities such as egoistic selfish, self-centeredness and insecure and pro-social personalities such as approachable, listening and accommodating as the main personalities among the healthcare administrators. The study showed that leadership culture significantly ($p=0.037$) influences the observed retention. It was observed that culture account for 18.3%

of nurse retention level. Leadership cultures such as leadership-as-coordination and leadership by example was shown to have significantly higher positive influence on nurse retention ($p=0.022$ and $p=0.041$ respectively) compared to the influence of the culture of leadership-as-dominance.

The results of this study suggest that healthcare managers can increase the level of nurse retention through the adoption of positive leadership cultures such as leadership by example and leader-as-coordination. The adoption of the culture of leader-as-coordination is associated with the inclusion of the nurses and other employees during decision-making and the sharing of resources. The culture of leadership by example involves the strategies where the leader acts as the first person to implement agreed resolution. In this case, the employees emulate the actions of the leader. The observation of this study is supported by the findings of previous studies [13]. The study carried out by [14] indicated that leadership culture that encourage employee participation in decision promote employee satisfaction and loyalty to the organization. Similar conclusions were obtained by the study by [15] that explained the importance of employee conscious leadership culture in ensuring the employee satisfaction and retention. The research by [16] suggested that leadership culture that create supportive environment for newly employed nurses reduces the chances of nurse turnover. Although the study did not establish a significant influence of leader personality on nurse retention, various literatures suggest that the personality traits of the leader affect the employee retention level [17]. The study by [18] indicated that leaders with positive leadership personalities that promote interaction between employee and management enhance the level of employee retention.

From the outcome of this study, it is evident that leadership culture is important for health care administrators to consider in other to increase the nurse retention levels. This study suggests that cross-sectional studies should be carried out further in other to analyze the effect of leader personality on nurse retention.

6 Conclusion

This study has provided an in-depth analysis of how nurse retention is influenced by leadership personality and culture. The outcome of this study have shown that leaders in the healthcare organization have two main leadership traits that include the pro-self personalities such as egoistic selfish, self-centeredness and insecure and pro-social personalities such as approachable, listening and accommodating. The study has also shown that leadership-as-coordination and leadership-as-dominance as the three major leadership cultures depicted by the leaders in the healthcare sector. The study has shown that leadership-as-coordination and leadership by example lead to increased nurse retention compared to leadership-as-dominance. The study, therefore, recommends that the healthcare administrators should work towards putting in place strategies that promote the culture of leadership-as coordination by ensuring that the nurses are involved in

decision-making and enhancing organization leadership. The study also suggests that increased nurse retention can be achieved through commitment by leaders to take the first initiative in the implementation of organization's policies. The study did not establish leadership personality to have significant influence on nurse retention. However, the study suggests that more research should be carried out to evaluate the outcome.

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