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RESEARCH ARTICLE

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND JOB SATISFACTION OF NURSING STAFF IN A PERIPHERAL GENERAL HOSPITAL IN GREECE: A SURVEY

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Abstract

Background: Over time, the working conditions in hospitals are becoming more and more demanding and the nursing staff is every day called to cope with them. In this context, the effective administration by the leading executives of the Nursing Directorate plays an important role in both guiding and motivating the staff to achieve the goals as well as to improve job satisfaction in general. The aim of the present study was to explore the prevailing leadership style applied in a General Hospital, from the perspective of the nursing staff, as well as the level of job satisfaction of the nurses who serve in the organisation.

Method and Material: In the period January 2020-February 2020, a survey was conducted at the General Hospital of Corfu using a questionnaire (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and Job Satisfaction Survey) in a random sample of 180 nurses from which 138 fully completed the questionnaire (76% response rate). Data analysis was performed by using the statistical package SPSS ver. 21.0.

Results: The average value of the Transformational and Transactional leadership styles is 3.4 while that of the Passive leadership is significantly lower (2.3 average value). Moreover, the nursing staff expressed a high level of satisfaction with the supervision and the chief nurse, with its relations with the colleagues and with the nature of the work, while its dissatisfaction was mainly expressed when it comes to "Working Conditions", "Promotion", "Privileges-Benefits" and "Salary". The Transformational and Transactional leadership styles were positively related to satisfaction with the promotion ($r = 0.22$), with the supervision by the chief nurse ($r = 0.63$ and $r = 0.40$ respectively) and with the nature of the work ($r = 0.25$ and $r = 0.18$ respectively). Transformational style was also positively related to the potential rewards ($r = 0.18$) and the relationship with colleagues ($r = 0.22$). Finally, the Passive leadership style was positively related to the satisfaction with the salary ($r = 0.32$), with the promotion ($r = 0.27$) and with the privileges-benefits ($r = 0.41$).

Conclusions: The nursing staff considered that the current leadership style involves a combination of elements of the Transformational and Transactional leadership styles. As for the job satisfaction of the staff, it ranged at moderate levels. There is an urgent need for further research related to job satisfaction which can be boosted by the implementation of incentive policies and training programmes for the nurse administrators in the new forms of administration by the Nursing Directorate.

Keywords: Hospital, job satisfaction, leadership style, nursing staff.

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INTRODUCTION

The areas of health care and social care are constantly changing, in recent years, due to technological developments, the need to reduce costs and at the same time increase efficiency of the system, the increased demand for health services by nursing care providers and their caregivers etc. In this context, health professionals are called upon to cope daily with existing changes by providing modern health services suitable to guarantee ongoing care.^{1,2} At the same time, effective administration also plays an important role in the effective functioning of health organizations.³

More specifically, the leaders of Nursing Services should have administrative skills, in order to achieve maximum possible performance of the health system, with limiting any problems that come up.³ In addition, the leaders play a crucial role in the management of human resources, enhancing interpersonal relationships, the organizational climate, among other things, the services provided and the maintenance of a quality health system.⁴ The leader of Nursing Services has a positive effect on the performance of nurses, leading to the achievement of the goals of the nursing services in general, by providing inspiration, motivation and professional satisfaction.^{5,6} Thus, achieving this contributes, among other things, to maximizing the performance of employees and the organization in general, the prevention of burnout phenomena and the possibility of resignation, as well as the limitation of acute feelings related to working life.^{7,8} Moreover, this factor is also associated with the degree of patient satisfaction and the well-being of the organism.^{8,9}

Similar studies of Ahmad et al.¹⁰ and of Alloubani et al.,¹¹ showed that transformative leadership application is related to the personal recognition of the leadership, the creativity-effectiveness of the organization, as well as the improvement of job satisfaction level and efficiency of employees, as opposed to the application of passive leadership style where the absence of leadership prevails and destruct organizational performance.

From the above it becomes clear that leadership and the degree of professional satisfaction play an important role in the devel-

opment and maintenance of a quality health system, the successful operation of which implies ensuring the highest possible level of Public Health and social assistance.^{4,12}

AIM

The aim of the present study was to explore the leadership style applied in the General Hospital of Corfu, in the light of the perception of the nursing staff, as well as the degree of professional satisfaction of the nurses serving in this organization. In addition, it also concerned the correlation that may exist between the current form of leadership and the professional satisfaction of the hospital's nurses.

METHOD

Data Collection Process

The research took place at the General Hospital of Corfu, between January 2020 and February 2020. This was a cross-sectional study. Some of the questionnaires were distributed in agreement with the heads of the clinics and the rest were shared by hand to the nursing staff.

Sample Survey

In the context of the survey, questionnaires were distributed to a random sample of 180 staff of nursing staff of university and technological education, as well as to assistants of Nurses of two years of study. Of the total sample, 137 completed the questionnaire (response rate 76.1%). Nine of the original 146 returned forms were excluded due to insufficient filling. Participation in the research was voluntary, and the rules of ethics were observed. Permission was obtained from the scientific and Administrative Board to carry out the research.

Measuring tool

To conduct the survey, a questionnaire was created which consisted of three modules. In particular, the first section included 13 questions related to the individual, demographic and labour data of the studied sample. The second section referred to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (M.L.Q-5X), construction of Avolio and Vas (2004) and weighted in Greek, which measures the full extent of leadership styles (transformative, transactional,

passive) and examines the outcome of leadership (greater effort, efficiency, leadership satisfaction). It includes 45 questions where the staff evaluates their immediate superiors (36 of them relate to the nine characteristics of the three leadership styles and the rest calculate its outcome). The answers are given on the five-tier Likert scale, which ranges from "not at all" to "often, usually if not always". Finally, the third section concerned the Job Satisfaction Survey questionnaire, created by Spector (1985) and translated into Greek, which includes 36 questions covering the nine factors of professional satisfaction. Evaluation is achieved through the use of Hexabatic Likert scale and answers range from "I totally disagree" to "I totally agree".

Statistical analysis

Mean values and standard deviations were used to describe the quantitative variables and absolute (N) and relative (%) frequencies were used to describe the qualitative variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to test the relationship of two quantitative variables. Correlation is considered low when the correlation coefficient (r) ranges from 0.1 to 0.3, moderate when the correlation coefficient ranges from 0.31 to 0.5, and high when the coefficient is greater than 0.5. Linear regression analysis was used to find independent factors related to the leadership scale and overall professional satisfaction score that resulted in dependency coefficients (B) and their standard errors (SE). The materiality levels were bilateral and the statistical materiality was set at 0.05. The statistical program SPSS 21.0 was used for the analysis.

RESULTS

Regarding the sex of the participants, 74.5% (N=102) of them were female and 25.5% (N=35) were male. Concerning the age status, the survey showed an average value of 45.7 years (SD=6.8 years). Also, 70.8% (N=97) of respondents were married and 39.4% (N=54) had two children. The majority of participants (40.9%) were graduates of Technological Institutes (Table 1). The vast majority of respondents (86.9%, N=119) were permanent employees. In addition, 38.7% (N=53) of nursing staff worked in clinics, 27% (N=37) in the psychiatric sector and 23.4%

(N=32) in special departments (m.ETH, surgery, m.T.N, Department Of Acids, Detox). Regarding the work experience of nursing staff in C.N. The average was 18.4 years (SD=8.0 years) and the current segment was 7.9 years (SD=6.5 years). The majority of participants (81.8% N=112) reported shift nurses. Also, 63.5% (N=87) had personally chosen the department they were working for and 67.2% (N=92) were satisfied with their current work. Finally, 72.3% (N=99) received an annual income of EUR 10.000-15.000 (Table 2).

The average value from the overall assessment of the transformative and transactional leadership style was 3.4 points (SD=0.7 points), and the passive leadership style was 2.3 points (SD=0.9 points). In terms of leadership outcome, the average value was 3.8 points (SD=0.9) (Table 3).

On the degree of professional satisfaction, the nursing staff expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their supervision and supervisor (m.t. 18,7, SD 4,5), from his relations with colleagues (m.t 17,6, SD 3,8) and finally from the nature of the work (m.t 16,9, SD 4,4). Dissatisfaction with his work was expressed mainly in the dimensions "privileges-benefits" (m.t 9,9, SD 4,0) and from the "salary" (m.t 9,3, SD 3,5) (Table 4).

The findings of the study related to the correlation between the three leading forms and the professional satisfaction of nursing staff in C.N.K. demonstrated that the transformative leadership style was positively related to satisfaction with promotion ($r=0.22, p=0.011<0.05$), supervision-supervision by the supervisor ($r=0.63, p=0.001<0.05$), potential rewards ($r=0.18, p=0.031<0.05$), relationship with colleagues ($r=0.22, p=0.009<0.05$), and the nature of the job ($r=0.25, p=0.003<0.05$). With regard to the transactional style of leadership, the results showed that this style was positively related to satisfaction with promotion ($r=0.22, p=0.010<0.05$), supervision-supervision ($r=0.40, p=0.001<0.05$), and finally the nature of the work ($r=0.18, p=0.037<0.05$). Regarding the passive leadership style, the results showed that they were positively related to salary satisfaction ($r=0.32, p=0.001<0.05$), promotion ($r=0.27, p=0.002<0.05$), and benefits - benefits ($r=0.41, p=0.001<0.05$) (Table 5).

Looking at the results of the dimensions of job satisfaction and those of the outcome of leadership, they demonstrated significant positive correlations between the three dimensions of the outcome of leadership and almost all dimensions of job satisfaction, except salary and benefits-benefits. In terms of the correlation of the three dimensions of the outcome of the leadership with the overall degree of satisfaction with this work was positive (Table 6).

Table 7 shows the results of the correlation of the degree of professional satisfaction with the transformative leadership style and with demographic and labour elements. Gender, child count, job Department choice and transformative leadership style were found to be significantly related to participants' overall job satisfaction. Specifically, women had an 11.72 point lower score compared to men. In addition, the score of participants with one and more than one child was 11.03 and 9.62 points respectively, lower compared to that of childless participants. Finally, respondents who had personally chosen the department they were working on had an 8.15 points higher score compared to those who had not chosen it.

When the other scores from the leadership questionnaire were introduced into the rotating model, the results of Table 8 were found which were similar to those of the above.

DISCUSSION

Data analysis showed that the dominant leadership styles applied in the General Hospital of Corfu are the transformative (M.t 3,4) and the transactional (m.T. 3,4). A portion of nurses claim that their immediate superiors reinforce them with confidence and dynamism. In addition, they consider that senior managers behave with understanding and personal interest in each individual and feel admiration and trust in the leaders of the department they fall under. This behaviour from the bosses contributes positively to the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization by achieving the empowerment and pleasure of the staff, as supported in Lin et al research¹³ and Boamah et al.,¹⁴ but also in surveys conducted in Greece by Davelou,¹⁵ Neratzi,³ and Apidopoulou.¹⁶

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A similar proportion of nurses who consider the transactional style mainstream, claim that their bosses reward by rewarding those who achieve the goals, while reprimanding by imposing penalties on those who fail to achieve them, as Abualrub & Alghamdi¹⁷ argues in his research implemented in Saudi Arabia. Finally, the average application value of the passive leadership style is significantly less (M.t 2,3). A small percentage of nurses believe that passive leadership is still exercised to a limited extent, despite the fact that their supervisor avoids being involved in vital issues of the organization and is absent in decision-making.

With regard to the outcome of leadership, the majority of nursing staff argue that their immediate bosses do not motivate staff enough; however, he is quite effective and very competent in the way of his management. The above results are consistent with the results of the research carried out by Kanelloupolou¹⁸ on the effectiveness of the leader and the satisfactory way of exercising the management. On the contrary, the survey of Chaitoglou¹⁹ showed a moderate degree of satisfaction of nursing staff in all dimensions of the outcome of leadership.

Concerning the degree of professional satisfaction statistical data showed that nursing staff expressed a moderate degree of professional satisfaction. More specifically, he expresses a high degree of satisfaction with the supervision - supervision exercised by his boss, his relations with colleagues and the nature of the work while his dissatisfaction is expressed mainly in the dimensions "privileges-benefits" and "salary". Similar findings showed studies conducted in the General Hospital of Naoussa and in various hospitals in central Greece and Athens by Gogos & Petsetaki,²⁰ Karvouniari & Diplou²¹ and Kanelloupolou.¹⁸ The respondents in surveys conducted abroad (South Africa and Turkey), Delobelle et al.,²² expressed a low degree of satisfaction with the financial benefits and additional fees. and of Masmumetal,²³ which noted, however, a high degree of satisfaction with the work environment and support from senior executives and colleagues.

The results of this research further demonstrate that both trans-

formative and transactional leadership styles are positively related to the job satisfaction of nursing staff. In particular, such styles are positively related to the satisfaction with supervision-supervision exercised by the boss and satisfaction with the nature of the work, as opposed to the passive style of leadership negatively related to the factors in question. Positive correlation of job satisfaction with promotion is found in all forms of leadership. The transformative style is a positive influence in addition, with relationship satisfaction with colleagues and potential rewards. Looking at the outcome of leadership, the results demonstrated significant positive correlations between the three dimensions of the outcome of leadership and the dimensions of job satisfaction, in addition to salary and perks-benefits. Kanelloupolou¹⁸ produced similar results in the 2019 survey. In addition, studies of Ahmadetal,¹⁰ Bormann & Anderson,²⁴ Abdelfahiz et al.,²⁵ and Alshahrani & Baig,²⁶ conducted outside Europe demonstrated a combination of transformative and transactional leadership styles and a positive correlation of these with the degree of professional satisfaction.

Finally, with regard to the correlation of the degree of professional satisfaction and leadership styles with the demographic and labour elements, it is concluded that of the staff that considers the transformative leadership style applied, male and childless workers are more satisfied with their work. As for the outcome of leadership, it is observed that as the leader's increases effort, his efficiency and leadership satisfaction, so does the overall staff satisfaction with his work.

LIMITATIONS

The questionnaire consisted of 94 questions, so the filling process was time consuming, which, in combination with the workload of nurses, discouraged participation of staff.

In addition, this research was carried out in a provincial hospital with a small sample of participants compared to the number of nursing staff working in public hospitals all over the country. Finally, the fear felt by the staff when asked to make a judgment about their immediate supervisor and the belief that this word-

ing may positively or negatively affect their position in the department was a key limitation of this investigation and a cause for the possible extraction of incorrect results.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, it becomes clear that the field of Nursing Institutions is complex and demanding. Therefore, both health care leaders and the management of the Nursing Service must take measures in order to create a healthy working environment, so that through this they can transmit the vision and objectives of the organization, and at the same time they can provide the appropriate resources to achieve goals of the organization. In addition, there is an urgent need to improve working conditions which should contribute positively to staff satisfaction.

The encouragement for constructive cooperation, the encouragement and motivation of the staff, the transfer of knowledge, the support to address personal needs by showing interest, the meritocracy, the development of an effective and efficient working environment must be a priority of the leaders, in order to the successful operation of the organization.

Last but not least, in order to achieve better patient satisfaction, which is the main purpose of health care services, the leaders of nursing services should design policies and programs in order to confront the factors that negatively affect work satisfaction.

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ANNEX

Table 1. Demographic Data of Nursing Staff

		N	%
Sex	Male	35	25,5
	Female	102	74,5
Age (Mean, SD)	45,7 (6,8)		
Marital Status	Singles	20	14,6
	Married	97	70,8
	Widows	3	2,2
	Divorced	15	10,9
	Others	2	1,5
Number Of Children	0	44	32,1
	1	28	20,4
	2	54	39,4
	3	10	7,3
	4	1	0,7
Education Level	Secondary School	7	5,1
	High School	31	22,6
	VET (Vocational Education)	21	15,3
	Technological Institute	56	40,9
	University	7	5,1
	Master/ Doctoral/ Specialty	15	10,9

Table 2.Working Data of the Nursing Stuff

		N	%
Official Status	Permanent Employee	119	86,9
	Indefinite Contract	9	6,6
	Fixed – term contract	9	6,6
Department	Outpatient	7	5,1
	Labs	1	0,7
	Clinics	53	38,7
	Psychiatric Department	37	27,0
	Closed Section (ICU, Surgery,Artificial Kidney Unit,Τμ.Οξεων, Dettox)	32	23,4
	Emergency Department	7	5,1
Years of service at Corfu General Hospital (Mean, SD)		18,4 (8,0)	
Years of service in the current department (Mean, SD)		7,9 (6,5)	
Position in the Hierarchy	Director of nursing service	1	0,7
	Head of Department	2	1,5
	Head of Division	13	9,5
	Nurse in charge	9	6,6
	Shift Nurse	112	81,8
The department you work in is a personal choice	No	50	36,5
	Yes	87	63,5
How satisfied are you with your current job	Very Dissatisfied	6	4,4
	Dissatisfied	16	11,7
	Satisfied	92	67,2
	Very Satisfied	23	16,8
Annual income from my service	Up to 10.000	13	9,5
	10.000-15.000	99	72,3
	16.000-20.000	24	17,5
	21.000-25.000	1	0,7
	>26.000	0	0,0

Table 3: Dimension for Leadership style and leadership outcome

	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Middle Value	SD
Idealized Influence (arrangements)	1,0	5,0	3,7	0,8
Idealized Influence (behavior)	1,8	4,8	3,4	0,6
Proactive Motivation	1,0	5,0	3,4	0,8
Mental Stimulation	1,0	5,0	3,5	0,9
Personalized Interest	1,0	5,0	3,1	0,8
Transformational Leadership	1,4	4,7	3,4	0,7
Possible Reward	1,0	5,0	3,6	0,8
Management Exceptionally (active)	1,0	5,0	3,2	0,9
Transactional Leadership	1,0	5,0	3,4	0,7
Management Exceptionally (passively)	1,0	4,3	2,4	0,8
Liberating Leadership	1,0	5,0	2,1	1,0
Passive Leadership	1,0	4,5	2,3	0,9
More Effort	1,0	5,0	3,6	1,0
Effectiveness	1,0	5,0	3,8	0,9
Satisfaction from Leadership	1,0	5,0	3,9	0,9
Leadership Outcome	1,0	5,0	3,8	0,9

Table 4: Results of Nine Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

	Minim- um Value	Maxi- mum Value	Middle Value	SD
Salary	4,0	16,0	9,3	3,5
Promotion	4,0	20,0	10,4	4,4
Supervision	4,0	24,0	18,7	4,5
Privileges - Benefits	4,0	20,0	9,9	4,0
Potential Rewards	4,0	24,0	11,6	4,0
Operating Conditions	4,0	24,0	11,0	3,8
Colleagues	9,0	24,0	17,6	3,8
Nature of Work	4,0	24,0	16,9	4,4
Communication	4,0	23,0	13,4	4,0
Overall Job Satisfaction Scores	41,0	189,0	118,6	21,5

Table 5: Correlation of the Dimensions of Job Satisfaction with Leadership Styles

	Transformative		Transactional		Passive	
	r	P	r	P	r	P
Salary	0,03	0,712	-0,12	0,171	0,32	<0,001
Promotion	0,22	0,011	0,22	0,010	0,27	0,002
Supervision	0,63	<0,001	0,40	<0,001	-0,57	<0,001
Privileges – Benefits	0,06	0,517	-0,03	0,700	0,41	<0,001
Potential Rewards	0,18	0,031	0,03	0,725	-0,04	0,639
Operating Conditions	0,10	0,231	0,03	0,741	-0,02	0,805
Colleagues	0,22	0,009	0,12	0,153	-0,47	<0,001
Nature of Work	0,25	0,003	0,18	0,037	-0,22	0,009
Communication	0,12	0,178	0,06	0,468	-0,35	<0,001
Overall Job Satisfaction Scores	0,36	<0,001	0,18	0,032	-0,14	0,097

Table 6: Correlation of the Dimensions of Leadership Outcome with the Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

	More Effort		Effectiveness		Satisfaction from Leadership	
	r	P	R	P	r	P
Salary	0,12	0,173	0,07	0,394	0,10	0,239
Promotion	0,28	0,001	0,17	0,042	0,18	0,031
Supervision	0,62	<0,001	0,73	<0,001	0,66	<0,001
Privileges – Benefits	0,13	0,142	0,08	0,361	0,07	0,429
Potential Reward	0,25	0,003	0,23	0,007	0,24	0,005
Operating Conditions	0,18	0,034	0,23	0,007	0,17	0,041
Colleagues	0,24	0,005	0,39	<0,001	0,33	<0,001
Nature of work	0,31	<0,001	0,43	<0,001	0,36	<0,001
Communication	0,29	0,001	0,37	<0,001	0,24	0,005
Overall Job Satisfaction Scores	0,47	<0,001	0,52	<0,001	0,46	<0,001

Table 7: Correlation of Job Satisfaction and Transformational Leadership with demographics and working data

		b+	SE++	P
Sex	Male (report)			
	Female	-11,72	4,39	0,009
Age		0,22	0,43	0,615
Married	No (report)			
	Yes	-3,04	4,22	0,473
Number of Children	0 (report)			
	1	-11,03	4,94	0,027
	>1	-9,62	4,46	0,033
Education Level	Secondary School/ High School / VET (report)			
	Technological Education / University/ / Doctoral/ Specialty	-2,00	4,06	0,623
Official Status	Permanent Employee (report)			
	Indefinite Contract /Fixed – Term Contract	2,18	5,11	0,671
Department	Clinics (report)			
	Psychiatric Department	2,48	4,06	0,543
	Closed Department (ICU,Surgery, Artificial Kidney Unit,Τμ.Οξεων, Detox)	1,96	4,52	0,666
	Other	11,10	5,60	0,058
Years of service at Corfu General Hospital		-0,30	0,36	0,415
Position in the Hierarchy	Responsible Position (report)			
	Shift Nurse	-3,89	5,32	0,466
The department you work in is a personal choice	No (report)			
	Yes	8,15	3,53	0,023
Annual income from my service	Up to 10.000 (report)			
	10.000-15.000	-16,19	6,02	0,068
	>15.000	-14,30	7,87	0,072
Transformative		12,57	2,53	<0,001

+dependency ratio ++standard rate error

Table 8: Correlation of Employee Satisfaction Level and Leadership Style with Demographics and working data.

		b⁺	SE⁺⁺	P
Transactional		9,01	2,59	0,001
Passive – Avoid Leadership		-3,99	2,26	0,080
	More Effort	9,52	1,59	<0,001
Leadership Outcome	Effectiveness	13,34	1,72	<0,001
	Satisfied from Leadership	11,38	1,67	<0,001