Relationships Among Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction Levels: A National Study of College of Nursing Faculty and Deans in Research Intensive Institutions

By Karen Worthy

Abstract

Effective leadership and employee job satisfaction are two factors that have been regarded as fundamental for organizational success. It has been shown that employees with high job satisfaction levels are likely to be more productive and exert more effort in pursuing organizational interests. An organization that fosters high employee job satisfaction is also more capable of recruiting and retaining employees. The purpose of this study was to identify perceived leadership styles of nursing deans to determine whether they correlate with nursing faculty job satisfaction. This was a descriptive, correlational research design with a self-administered questionnaire. The framework for this study was an integrative model of full range leadership developed by Bass and Avolio (2004) and a job satisfaction schema by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967). The sample for this national study consisted of 303, out of 1626 recruited, full-time nursing faculty members from 24 public, research universities with very high research activity in the United States. The study participants completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5x-Short, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short Form, and a Researcher Developed Demographic Questionnaire. The study presents the following four research findings. First, nursing deans tend to display transformational leadership style more frequently than transactional and passive/avoidant leadership styles. Second, nursing faculty members reported moderate levels of satisfaction in their jobs. Third, nursing deans’ use of the transformational leadership style of attributed idealized influence was the highest significant and positive predictor of the level of nursing faculty job satisfaction. However, when nursing deans used
the passive/avoidant (laissez-faire) leadership style, it significantly and negatively predicted nursing faculty job satisfaction levels. Finally, there was a statistically significant relationship between three demographic variables to perceived leadership styles of deans and nursing faculty job satisfaction: faculty age range, faculty tenure at the current institution, and faculty interaction with the dean. The knowledge obtained from this study has the potential to contribute to the field of education by laying a foundation for the formulation of a nursing education best practice model aimed at improving faculty satisfaction, and, subsequently, productivity and retention.