



ARTÍCULO ORIGINAL

Leadership styles and organizational climate perceived by the nursing staff of a public hospital in the city of Bahía Blanca*

Estilos de liderazgo y clima organizacional percibido por el personal de enfermería de un hospital público de la ciudad de Bahía Blanca

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: leading in Health implies the ability to improve a service through different actors and through changes that benefit the population. The work climate is a filter or intervening phenomenon that mediates between the factors of the organizational system (structure, leadership, decision making) and the motivational tendencies that translate into behavior that has consequences on the organization in terms of productivity, satisfaction, turnover and absenteeism.

Objective: to describe the perception of leadership styles and organizational climate perceived by the nursing staff of a public hospital in the city of Bahía Blanca.

Method: an observational, descriptive, cross-sectional, descriptive study was conducted from May to June 2021 in a public hospital in the city of Bahía Blanca, Argentina. The sample consisted of 70 nursing professionals. Two instruments were used, which have been previously validated with a Cronbach's Alpha with values of 0,962 and 0,964 respectively.

Results: from the sociodemographic point of view, the prevalence of the female sex stands out, 50 % of the respondents were between 23 and 37 years of age; similar values were found in the group of Bachelor's Degree in Nursing among the academic degrees. When the behavior of the questionnaires on Leadership and Organizational Climate was analyzed, 10 of 12 indicators had neutral values; it is noteworthy that there were no indicators with negative values on average. Pearson's correlation coefficient was analyzed, as well as the level of statistical significance in each of the cases.

Conclusions: the population studied was characterized by a female prevalence, young with nursing degree training and less than 10 years of work. The study found a close relationship between leadership and organizational climate, although respondents reported neutrality in the overall perception of these two dimensions.

Keywords: Leadership; Nursing; Organization And Administration; Hospital Administration; Work Environment.

RESUMEN

Introducción: liderar en Salud implica la capacidad de mejorar un servicio a través de diferentes actores y mediante cambios que beneficien a la población. El clima laboral es un filtro o fenómeno interviniente que media entre los factores del sistema organizacional (estructura, liderazgo, toma de decisiones) y las tendencias motivacionales que se traducen en un comportamiento que tiene consecuencias sobre la organización en cuanto a productividad, satisfacción, rotación y ausentismo.

Objetivo: describir la percepción de los estilos de liderazgo y el clima organizacional percibido por el personal de enfermería de un hospital público de la ciudad de Bahía Blanca.

Método: se realizó un estudio observacional, descriptivo de corte transversal en el periodo de mayo a junio de 2021 en un hospital público de la ciudad de Bahía Blanca en Argentina. La muestra estuvo constituida por 70 profesionales de enfermería. Se utilizaron dos instrumentos, que ha sido previamente validado con un Alfa de Cronbach con valores de 0,962 y 0,964 respectivamente.

Resultados: desde el punto de vista sociodemográfico destaca la prevalencia del sexo femenino, el 50 % de los encuestados se encontraba en edades entre los rangos de 23 y 37 años, valores similares se encontraron en el grupo de los Licenciados en Enfermería entre los grados académicos. Cuando se analizó el comportamiento de los cuestionarios sobre Liderazgo, y Clima Organizacional, 10 de 12 indicadores tuvieron valores neutros, llama la atención que no hubo indicadores con valores negativos como promedio. Se analizó el coeficiente de correlación de Pearson, así como el nivel de significación estadística en cada uno de los casos.

Conclusiones: la población estudiada se caracterizó por una prevalencia femenina, joven con formación de grado en enfermería y menos de 10 años de trabajo. El estudio encontró una relación estrecha entre en liderazgo y el clima organizacional, si bien los encuestados plantean neutralidad en la percepción global de estas dos dimensiones.

Palabras clave: Liderazgo; Enfermería; Organización Y Administración; Administración Hospitalaria; Ambiente De Trabajo.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing is characterized as a profession that provides continuous care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It has a great responsibility as it works with human lives, providing care in order to meet altered basic needs. It is composed of different levels such as: auxiliary nurse, professional nurse, bachelor's degree in nursing, master's degree and doctorate. It is a heterogeneous profession in which females predominate, most of them being breadwinners, with double jobs: That situation leads them almost always to work overload.

The work climate is a filter or intervening phenomenon that mediates between organizational system factors (structure, leadership, decision making) and motivational tendencies that result in a behavior that affects the organization in terms of productivity, satisfaction, turnover, absenteeism, among other factors. The human and physical environment consists of a set of variables, qualities, attributes or relatively permanent properties of a particular work environment. It is related to people's behavior, the way they work and relate to each other, their interaction with the company, management leadership, machinery used and employee activity itself.⁽¹⁾

We can say that work climate is the environment generated by a group of people performing a common activity, where emotions play an essential role, important for reasoning, conflict resolution and decision making. In this way, work climate interacts with leadership.

An essential ingredient for the development of an effective work environment is motivation, a term derived from Latin *motivus* (movement) suffixed with *cion* (action), which allows people to get moving, to take action. people's motivation is often related to their level of expectations. Extrinsic motivation is mostly related to obligations, duty, and responsibilities, while intrinsic motivation is personal, an inner force that drives to achieve goals in order to satisfy needs. Inversely, there is sometimes a negative work environment linked to demotivation at workplace but this area is more complex since many variables are involved.^(2,3)

A bad working environment is a threat to the institution, leading to underperformance, absenteeism, work overload, poor interpersonal relationships, burnout, stress, among others. Above all, "health institutions provide services centered on scientific knowledge, principles and values, creativity, responsibility and leadership, being the latter central axis for the achievement of both personal and institutional objectives".⁽⁴⁾

Leading in health implies the ability to improve a service through different actors and changes that benefit the population. Currently, healthcare system has undergone significant changes that result in a new concept of leadership, due to problems in training, motivation, recognition and commitment. Therefore, leading human talent requires reevaluating diverse styles of leadership and management.⁽⁵⁾

Leadership is the art or process of influencing people to willingly and enthusiastically try to achieve goals. Leaders are key team players who are dedicated to their work, have excellent communication skills, and motivate, inspire, and direct their subordinates.

Nursing leadership needs to be strengthened, enabling improvements in communication, work climate, decision making, and quality of nursing care.⁽⁵⁾

Hence, given the importance of the subject, this research is carried out with the purpose of describing the perception of leadership styles and organizational climate perceived by the nursing staff of a public hospital in Bahía Blanca.

METHOD

Type of study and setting: an observational, descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted from May to June 2021 in a public hospital in Bahía Blanca, Argentina.

Sample: The sample consisted of 70 professional nurses.

Inclusion criteria: nursing personnel with a nursing degree, bachelor's degree in nursing or postgraduate degree with more than 6 months of seniority in the institution.

Exclusion criteria: personnel who did not agree to participate in the study and did not have contact with patients in their professional activities within the institution.

Data collection instrument: two instruments, proposed by Mancha Álvarez, were used: Leadership Instrument and Organizational Climate Instrument, which have been previously validated with a reliability rated as excellent (Cronbach's Alpha 0,962 and 0,964 respectively).⁽⁶⁾

Ethical aspects: the survey was anonymous and was administered after informed consent had been approved, where the researcher's commitment to not disclose data that would allow the identification of the respondents was made clear.

Statistical analysis: statistical analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel package. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to analyse the indicators by country. Values of $p < 0,05$ were considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

From the sociodemographic point of view, the prevalence of the females stands out TABLE 1 shows characteristics of the study sample, where 50 % of the respondents were between 23 and 37 years of age, and similar values were found in the group of Bachelor's Degree in Nursing among the academic degrees.

Table 1. Sample sociodemographic characterization

Variables	N	%	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (p value)
Gender			
Masculine	18	25,7	p<0,001
Femenine	52	74,3	
Age rank			
23 to 37	35	50	p=0,166
38 to 52	26	37,1	
53 to 67	8	11,4	
68 to 82	1	1,4	
Highest academic degree			
Nursing Assistant	6	8,6	p<0,001
Nurse Practitioner	28	40	
Bachelor's Degree in Nursing	35	50	
Master's Degree	1	1,4	
Years of graduation			
0 to 10	47	67,1	p=0,010
11 to 21	17	24,3	
22 to 32	3	4,3	
33 to 40	6	8,6	
Years working in the institution			
0 to 8	41	58,6	p=0,004
9 to 17	15	21,4	
18 to 26	7	10	
27 to 35	7	10	

When the Leadership and Organizational Climate questionnaires were analyzed, 10 out of 12 indicators had neutral values, although it is noteworthy that there were no indicators with negative values on average, as shown in table 2. Table 3 shows Pearson's correlation coefficient values, as well as the level of statistical significance in each of the cases.

Tabla 2. Estilos de liderazgo y Clima Organizacional

Styles	N	Mean Standard Deviation
Leadership styles		
Transformational	3,50	4(0,93)
Charisma	3,37	3(0,85)
Inspiration	3,11	3(0,81)

Intellectual Stimulation	3,64	4(1,07)
Individualized Consideration	3,50	4(1,12)
Transactional	3,74	4(1,00)
Laissez Faire Leadership	3,58	4(1,11)
Organizational Climate		
Self-fulfillment	3,78	4(0,91)
Work involvement	3,76	4(0,86)
Supervision	3,56	4(0,96)
Communication	3,65	4(0,90)
Working conditions	3,70	4(0,92)

Tabla 3. Correlación entre indicadores.

	Transformational	Charisma	Inspiration	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualized Consideration	Transactional	Laissez Faire Leadership	Self-fulfillment	Work involvement	Supervision	Communication	Working conditions
Transformational	-											
Charisma	r = 0,6899 P<0,0001	-										
Inspiration	r = 0,3755 P=0,0014	r = 0,5427 P<0,0001	-									
Intellectual Stimulation	r = 0,8921 P<0,0001	r = 0,6677 P<0,0001	r = 0,3737 P=0,0014	-								
Individualized Consi	r = 0,9063 P<0,	r = 0,7118 P<0,	r = 0,3130 P=0,	r = 0,9236	-							

derati on	000 1	000 1	008 3	P<0, 0001								
Trans actio nal	r = 0,91 68 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,71 48 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,32 90 P=0, 005 4	r = 0,93 19 P<0, 0001	r = 0,940 2 P<0,0 001	-						
Laisse z Faire Leade rship	r = 0,87 13 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,68 27 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,31 35 P=0, 008 2	r = 0,86 98 P<0, 0001	r = 0,897 0 P<0,0 001	r = 0,90 95 P<0, 000 1	-					
Self- fulfill ment	r = 0,70 38 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,61 65 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,31 61 P=0, 007 7	r = 0,78 14 P<0, 0001	r = 0,758 2 P<0,0 001	r = 0,81 12 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,72 19 P<0, 0001	-				
Work involv emen t	r = 0,72 20 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,60 87 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,34 21 P=0, 003 7	r = 0,80 85 P<0, 0001	r = 0,777 2 P<0,0 001	r = 0,83 58 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,73 57 P<0, 0001	r = 0,95 41 P<0, 000 1	-			
Super vision	r = 0,73 08 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,56 45 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,29 53 P=0, 013 1	r = 0,79 42 P<0, 0001	r = 0,780 9 P<0,0 001	r = 0,81 10 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,75 71 P<0, 0001	r = 0,93 54 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,93 14 P<0, 000 1	-		
Comm unicat ion	r = 0,72 12 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,58 20 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,32 33 P=0, 006 3	r = 0,80 54 P<0, 0001	r = 0,754 2 P<0,0 001	r = 0,81 45 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,75 05 P<0, 0001	r = 0,94 39 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,95 73 P<0, 000 1	r = 0,93 67 P<0, 000 1	-	
Worki ng condi tions	r = 0,61 46 p<0, 000 1	r = 0,59 68 p<0, 000 1	r = 0,34 63 p=0, 003 3	r = 0,69 81 p<0, 0001	r = 0,672 4 p<0,0 001	r = 0,73 28 p<0, 000 1	r = 0,67 93 p<0, 0001	r = 0,94 63 p<0, 000 1	r = 0,92 52 p<0, 000 1	r = 0,91 84 p<0, 000 1	r = 0,94 74 p<0, 000 1	-

DISCUSSION

A total of 74 % of the respondents were females because, historically and culturally, the nursing profession has been carried out by women due to their maternal instinct and innate ability to provide timely care in a natural and spontaneous way. Beyond this aspect the nursing role involves management and Leadership functions and competencies.

Pereyra and Esquivel argue that the growing attention given to care workers in recent years has to do, fundamentally, with the fact that female labor participation has generated a sustained increase in the demand for care services.⁽⁷⁾

35 % of the respondents are young, ranging in age from 23 to 37 years, which represents an important workforce for nursing. This is attributed to the fact that many people study nursing as a vocation. Furthermore, nursing is a relatively short career, plenty of job opportunities, with accessible nursing schools that have flexible schedules, allowing people, who have a job, to study this career.

Within the healthcare system, nursing represents the most important workforce providing care 24 hours a day. 50 % of the respondents have a Bachelor's degree in Nursing, which is beneficial for the health care system, ensuring quality and safety in care because of their competence in health care management, comfort, education and supervision.

58,6 % of the respondents have less than 8 years of seniority in the institution. This sample reveals how, in recent years, nursing has had a great boom given its presentation through various media, resulting in higher demand for nurses in public and private institutions.⁽⁸⁾

Therefore, nursing education and professional training have been boosted to meet the growing demand for professionals in the region; Encouraging young people, accrediting schools, strengthening and promoting professionalization and, finally, creating attractive labor markets. Those are strategies that can have a positive impact on increasing the density of licensed nurses and strengthening health services.⁽⁹⁾

Training is related to leadership styles, due to the constant search for knowledge, and new tools in order to improve the nursing discipline. Leadership is an elementary competence for developing several activities, timely decision making, conflict resolution and good communication.

The results show that young people have a better leadership style, as they represent a generation with access to more technological tools. They are innovative and have a different approach to people, which improves human relations resulting in a good working environment.

The survey results also show that there are several leadership styles, and that there is no predominance of one leadership style over another, rather these leadership styles coexist within the institution in a favorable way, without rivalry, in an impartial manner.

It is remarkable that the leadership with the least variability was transformational and transactional.

Transactional leadership is based on traditional models, founded on exchange or transaction, as the leader uses power, by rewarding or sanctioning workers according to their performance. This kind of leader is limited to maintaining the normal flow of operations in the organization, with no tendency towards strategic development. The transactional leader recognizes the needs and desires of the subordinates and explains how they can be satisfied through rewards, as long as goals or tasks specified by the leader are fulfilled.^(10,11)

On the other hand, transformational leadership focuses on increasing the interest of workers, the dissemination and approval of the mission, putting the welfare of the group before individual interest. Likewise, efforts are focused on recognizing and developing the potential of workers, transforming their ideology, attitude and feelings. For instance, transformational leadership has an influence not only on the structure of the organization, but also on its culture.⁽¹²⁾

The presence of both types of leadership contributes substantially to the improvement of performance and self-esteem, which also enhances interpersonal relations, motivation, sense of belonging, and

communication. This has an impact on achieving those goals proposed by Management, which will also be reflected in the performance of the service, providing a better quality of care.

Non-positive leadership styles are those where a negative work environment is perceived, reducing employee performance, leading to low self-esteem, generating stressful situations, causing conflicts, such as: poor interpersonal relationships, lack of commitment, lack of responsibility, higher absenteeism. As a result, nurses provide poor quality health services.

Perceptions of inspirational leadership were the lowest among respondents. Firstly, it can be stated that inspirational leadership strategy is better than bureaucratic leadership because it does not work under strict rules to ensure everything operates well. Secondly, it is preferable to autocratic leadership because it does not work as an extreme commanding leadership over the work team. Thirdly, inspirational leadership is better than charismatic leadership because it empowers the entire work team.⁽¹³⁾

Self-fulfillment, work involvement, supervision, communication and working conditions are indicators that promote the development of a good working environment, being key determinants that favor and influence the people who carry out their daily work, interacting in an equitable and positive way in the institution. These features are fundamental and motivating for the development and achievement of a good organizational climate.

A positive perception of organizational climate allows workers to feel motivated, efficient, committed, recognized and empowered by the institution. Achieving a good organizational climate is fundamental to obtain results that benefit the institution, the employees and the patient. This is accomplished by providing quality care, avoiding adverse events, maintaining assertive communication, making the right decisions, and working effectively and efficiently as a team.

Leadership styles have a strong influence on the organizational climate, based on the fact that the leader is a great communicator, the one who drives, directs and influences in a favorable way the fulfillment of aims through teamwork with commitment and responsibility. Leadership in nursing is an essential competence to achieve quality care, to work in an organized and coordinated manner, with good performance, using strategies to reach results that benefit all.

CONCLUSIONS

The studied population was characterized by a prevalence of young females with a bachelor's degree in nursing and less than 10 years of work. The study found a close relation between leadership and organizational climate, although respondents reported neutrality in the overall perception of these two dimensions.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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