

Creating Healthy Work Environments 2019

Inspiring a Shared Vision: A Case Study of a Nursing Department Chair

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Kouzes and Posner's (2010) leadership theory presents five practices of exemplary leadership. These principles include model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. This case study focuses on the principle of inspiring a shared vision. Kouzes and Posner (2012) described uniting people around a shared vision by providing a sense of meaning and purpose. Successful future planning by leaders requires a departmental vision. Department leaders inspiring a shared vision provide focus and help to establish a sense of purpose. This shared vision creates a clear pathway for the future and provides opportunities for collaboration to move forward with change. Despite the abundant literature documenting the need for leadership in nursing, limited literature examines nursing department chair leadership.

The purpose of this case study is to describe how a Department Chair of Nursing at a state university uses Kouzes and Posner's (2010) practice of inspiring a shared vision. The Department Chair of Nursing at the university of interest is the main leader of the nursing program who is involved with day to day decision making and operational functioning of the nursing unit. Three main propositions were formulated in this study. First, the establishment of a sense of purpose by the Department Chair of Nursing enhances and directs the shared vision of the department. Second, the use of encouraging language and passion by the Department Chair of Nursing assists with fostering a shared vision in the department that helps to move the department forward to a favorable future. Third, the Department Chair of Nursing exemplifies Kouzes and Posner's practice of inspiring a shared vision by consistently supporting and inspiring individuals within the department to garner followers and lead effectively.

A review of literature revealed that numerous studies looked at Kouzes and Posner's principles of exemplary leadership in the hospital setting. However, specific research involving nursing department chair leadership was lacking. One of the most related articles to department chair leadership was written by Broome (2013) who investigated the self-reported leadership styles, behaviors, and experiences of nursing school deans in the United States. The author provided that there has been little attention paid to developing strong academic leaders in nursing (Broome, 2013). However, the role and focus of deans and chairs are considerably different, thus requiring further research regarding the leadership of the nursing chairperson.

There are other considerations that are unique to nursing department chair leadership. Recent changes in higher education enrollment and the increasing presence of financial concerns in higher education place a new burden on nursing department chair leadership (Brown, 2015). Department chairs' leadership must include vision and the skill to bring each member in the department into a group that can think collaboratively about the questions facing their discipline,

department, and institution to remain competitive (Hecht, 2013). The aging nursing workforce and the current nursing shortage also both contribute to the challenges encountered by nursing management when planning succession (Ponti, 2009). Chairpersons that inspire and share vision within their department through language and passion may can effectively enlist others to work together (Grossman & Valiga, 2017).

In this study, a single instrumental case study design was used. The single case study design was selected because it represents conditions and situations that may occur in similar university settings (Yin, 2014). A case study approach was an appropriate method to describe the “how” and “why” questions in the uncontrolled, observed environment within a university setting.

Data was first gathered through a semi structured interview with guided questions, designed to elicit information related to the study questions. The interview was recorded and then later transcribed by the researchers. The interviewee’s Curriculum Vitae and demographic data were also obtained. Additional data was collected over a period of several weeks through observation, archived meeting minutes, and email communication. All data was reviewed systematically through triangulation of multiple sources. An inductive approach was utilized to discern themes from the data. Convergent evidence was developed by pattern matching data collected from each of the outlined sources. Specific passages were pulled from the document and concepts were assigned to words, sentences, and paragraphs. Significant passages and themes were then reviewed and a collection of the data was compiled that related to Kouzes and Posner’s theory of exemplary leadership. Pattern matching techniques of this approach coincided with design and methods as outlined by Yin (2014). Quality was established by both researchers listening to the recorded interview, transcribing and then comparing transcription findings. Data saturation was achieved once no new themes emerged through data analysis. Observation, archived meeting minutes, and email communication were also considered and integrated into the presenting themes.

Several patterns emerged when reviewing the data. The first proposition suggested that the Department Chair of Nursing established a sense of purpose that enhances and directs the shared vision of the department. Two themes emerged that correspond to this proposition: empowerment and mission and vision focus. The second proposition included the use of encouraging language and passion by the Department Chair of Nursing. This approach assists in fostering a shared vision in the department to help move the department forward to a favorable future. The themes that emerged include respect, positive reinforcement, and trait enhancement. The third proposition revolved around the Department Chair of Nursing exemplifying Kouzes and Posner’s practice of inspiring a shared vision by consistently supporting and inspiring individuals within the department to garner followers and lead effectively. The major theme that emerged was inspiring others.

Using Kouzes and Posner’s principle of inspiring a shared vision, this study concluded that the Department Chair of Nursing can enhance and direct the vision of the department, can help move the department forward to a favorable future, and can inspire others within the department. Examples from this case, segmented by discerned themes, showcase ways to utilize Kouzes and Posner’s principle of inspiring a shared vision. Yet, with a limited body of current literature, the impact of a Department Chair of Nursing on inspiring a shared vision remains difficult to

describe. Further studies are recommended to better understand the impact and influence of these leadership practices.

Title:

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Keywords:

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References:

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Abstract Summary:

Explore the utilization of Kouzes and Posner's leadership principles of inspiring a shared vision through a case study of a Nursing Department Chair. Discover ways nursing leaders can enhance and direct the vision of a department and inspire others to change.

Content Outline:

1. Introduction
 1. Kouzes and Posner's leadership principles
 1. Detail origin of principles and give examples of each
 2. Elaborate on inspire a shared vision
 2. Provide purpose
 1. Brief review of literature
 2. Describe research gap
2. Methodology
 1. Sample (Department Chair of Nursing)
 2. Setting
 3. Introduce propositions
 1. Proposition 1
 2. Proposition 2
 3. Proposition 3
 4. Data Collection Methods
 1. Case study design
 2. Data collected
 1. Interview
 2. Observation
 3. Meeting minutes
 4. Emails
 3. Transcription
 5. Analysis
 1. Pattern matching
 2. Triangulation
 3. Establish quality
3. Results
 1. Themes (segmented by proposition)
 1. Proposition 1
 1. Empowerment
 1. Examples from findings
 2. Suggestions for implementation
 2. Mission and vision focus
 1. Examples from findings
 2. Suggestions for implementation
 2. Proposition 2
 1. Respect
 1. Examples from findings
 2. Suggestions for implementation
 2. Positive reinforcement

1. Examples from findings
 2. Suggestions for implementation
3. Trait enhancement
 1. Examples from findings
 2. Suggestions for implementation
3. Proposition 3
 1. Inspiring others
 1. Examples from findings
 2. Suggestions for implementation
4. Consider rival explanations
 1. Alignment with nursing theory
 2. Other considerations
5. Provide limitations
 1. Does not allow for interpretation of success over time
 2. Limited opportunities for observation
 3. Input obtained from only the chair, other staff member input could influence results
6. Recommendations for future research
 1. Additional leaders
 2. Additional and/or different settings
 1. University type (public, private)
 2. University/department size
 3. Interview faculty
 4. Longitudinal research
7. Conclusion
 1. Using principles of inspiring a shared vision can be effective in departmental leadership
 2. Continue to conduct research to support findings

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