Facilitation of Self-leadership in Nurse Educators

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Introduction and Background

Self-leadership is a process through which people influence themselves to achieve self-direction and self-motivation necessary to behave and perform in desirable ways. Nurse educators are coordinators of programmes, disciplines, subjects and projects in the institutions and are recognized as very strong role models who can easily foster the leadership development of student nurses. However, leadership experts indicate that one cannot be expected to lead others effectively if they are unable to lead ‘the self’ effectively. The challenges that nurse educators meet during teaching and learning require nurse educators who are creative, innovative, resilient and self-leaders. Individuals with self-leadership have high degrees of internal motivation, that is, they have the internal drive to expect more of themselves and persist through difficulties until they achieve their goals.

Although nurse educators are expected to be role models and leaders who promote the professional development of student nurses and peers, there are instances where they fail to display the expected self-leadership attributes. The question that arose therefore was:

How can self-leadership within nurse educators be facilitated in nursing education institutions?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to analyse the self-leadership within nurse educators in order to develop guidelines that could facilitate the development of self-leadership.

Methodology

The study employed an exploratory, descriptive sequential mixed-method design to answer the above question. The study has three (3) phases. Phase 1 consists of two sub-phases. This presentation reports on Phase 1, sub-phase 2, the qualitative phase that explores and describes the perceptions of nurse educators with regard to their self-leadership and how this can be facilitated in a nursing education institution.

The population consisted of nurse educators teaching at nursing education institutions in one province in South Africa. Focus group interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. Data were analysed using Tesch’s data analysis protocol.

Findings

The themes that emerged from the data were related to perceptions of self-leadership in nurse educators; engagement in self-leadership activities; motivational factors in self-leadership; and facilitation of self-leadership in nurse educators.

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<th>THEME</th>
<th>MAIN CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUB-CATEGORY</th>
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| THEME 1
Perceptions of self-leadership
in nurse educators |
View of self-leadership
through mirroring the self |
Being in possession of self-discipline
Being a visionary leader
Being a goal setter
Being a role model
Being a self-motivator
Being in possession of intra and interpersonal skills |

View of self-leadership as related to knowledge |
Being an innovator
Being organised
Being a knowledge-seeker
Being a reflective practitioner |

View of self-leadership in relation to students |
Responsible and accountable towards students |

View of self-leadership within the realms of the community |
Community teacher |

THEME 2
Engagement in self-leadership activities |
Engagement in personal activities |
Self-development
Self-reflection
Self-control |

Engagement in work-related tasks |
Role modeling
Team working
Taking leadership role |

THEME 3
Motivational factors in self-leadership |
Motivating factors |
Internal motivating factors
External motivating factors |

De-motivating factors |
Lack of incentives
Lack of management support
Lack of collegial support |

THEME 4
Facilitation of self-leadership
in nurse educators |
Facilitation of self-leadership
by the self |
Continuing professional development |

Facilitation of self-leadership
by the institution |
Mentoring
Succession planning
Management support |

Conclusion

Nurse educator self-leadership is beneficial to teaching and learning, and thus contributes to improved performance of individual educators, the teaching team and the nursing education institution itself. The nurse educators’ own description of their self-leadership and exploration of self-leadership practices resulted in a deeper understanding of how the development of self-leadership could be facilitated.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to enhance self-leadership of nurse educators:

- Engage nurse educators in programmes that would develop their self-leadership activities
- Enhance the motivation of nurse educators through interactive programmes and initiatives with the focus on self-development
- It is prudent that institutional leadership and policy makers support the facilitation of self-leadership in nurse educators in light of the benefits it presents

References


