Deans’ Perceptions of Leadership Strategies Used to Manage a Multicultural Faculty Environment in Saudi Arabian Nursing Schools: A Qualitative Study

Sanaa Alsulami, RN, MSN
PhD Student
School of Nursing
The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
October 31st, 2017
Disclosure Information

- Sanaa Alsulami, RN, MSN
- Gwen Sherwood, RN, Ph.D., FAAN, ANEF
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- No Conflict-of-Interest to declare
- This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors
Learning Objectives

The learner will be able to:

- Describe the faculty work environment of Schools of Nursing in Saudi Arabia
- Recognize the perceptions of deans of Saudi nursing schools regarding leading diverse faculty environments
- Describe the influence of cultural diversity on the school outcomes
Environment of Nursing Schools in Saudi Arabia

- Nursing schools rely on recruiting expatriates willing to move to Saudi Arabia.
  - 62.5% of faculty in the three top Saudi schools of nursing are from other countries (Zakari, 2012).
- Diverse faculty represent different nationalities, ethnicities, ages, gender, educational backgrounds, academic ranks, and years of experience.
- Low enrollment in Saudi nursing schools and limited graduate school option contribute to a continuing shortage of Saudi faculty.
Environment of Nursing Schools in Saudi Arabia

• In the late 1990s, Saudi government developed a ‘Saudization’ program that restricts the number of foreign employees.
• Many Saudi nurses are studying abroad for graduate degrees.
• The process of replacing international/foreign employees with competent Saudi workers has been slow.
• Each dean/director is managing a diverse faculty environment.
The Purpose of the Study

- Because **NO studies** have examined the experience of leading a largely non-Saudi academic environment yet, the study aimed
  - To explore the experiences of nursing school deans in Saudi Arabia regarding how they lead their diverse faculty environments.
  - To describe deans perspective of the influence of cultural diversity among faculty on school outcomes.
Methodology

Design & Sample

- A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Qualitative Design
- Convenience sampling
- Open-ended semi-structured interviews
- 5 interviews ranged 30 to 60 minutes
- 5 Saudi deans participated via Skype or FaceTime
Data Analysis

- Content analysis guided qualitative analysis.
- Interviews were transcribed verbatim.
- Redundancies, repetitions, and unimportant digressions were eliminated.
- Codes were obtained from the five interviews and sorted under themes.
- Member-checking helped validate findings.
## Findings and Discussion

### Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School Types</th>
<th>4 public nursing schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 private nursing school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>5 deans are Saudi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>3 are women and 2 are men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Specialty</td>
<td>3 are nurses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 is a physiotherapist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 is a physiologist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings and Discussion

Four Descriptive Themes

- Cultural Diversity in Saudi Schools of Nursing
- Challenges of Managing Diverse Faculty Environments
- Leadership Strategies Used by Saudi Deans
- Effects of Cultural Diversity in Saudi Nursing Schools
Theme 1: Cultural Diversity in Saudi Nursing Schools

- **70% to 93%** of faculty in the 5 nursing schools were non-Saudi from:
  - Egypt, India, the United Kingdom, South Africa, the Philippines, and other.
- This diversity represents **different** values, beliefs, languages, views of nursing, educational backgrounds, and experiences that often vary from Saudi nationals.
- As the leader, deans/directors should demonstrate a deep respect and understanding of multiculturalism in nursing schools.
Theme 1: Cultural Diversity in Saudi Nursing Schools

- Deans reported high turnover among non-Saudi faculty:
  - Not being able to adapt to the new culture.
  - Instability of a school’s leadership system.
  - Better job offers.
  - Language barriers.

- High turnover increases the workload on the other faculty members.
- Deans expressed support for the “Saudization” program to lower turnover.
- New faculty need intentional mentoring and inclusive support to ease transition and foster success.
Theme 2: Challenges of Managing A Diverse Faculty Environment

• Communication
  ➢ Multiple languages among non-Saudi faculty requires extra effort to communicate.
  ➢ Diverse educational and work backgrounds require extra guidance.
  ➢ Effective dean-faculty relationship have a significant impact on faculty commitment to the organization.
Theme 2: Challenges of Managing A Diverse Faculty Environment

• Stability
  - Frequent and unexpected changes contribute to relative instability among the leadership system of nursing schools.
  - Frequent changes in the schools’ leadership system lead to high turnover among non-Saudi faculty.

• Acclimation
  - Non-Saudi faculty and their families experience difficulty in coping with Saudi lifestyle and culture, and Arabic language.
  - Academic administrators strive to build a healthy work culture.
Theme 3: Leadership Strategies Used by Saudi Deans

- Environment is rapidly changing.
- Deans recognized the need for improvement therefore some stated the importance of using transformational leadership.
Theme 3: Leadership Strategies Used by Saudi Deans

• Overall, deans stated their focus should be:
  ➢ Acknowledging faculty members’ personal identities.
  ➢ Providing mentoring and faculty development workshops.
  ➢ Ensuring the appropriate skill mix among faculty.
  ➢ Facilitating culture of communication and listening.
  ➢ Promoting decentralization and sharing decision making.
Theme 4: Impact of Multiculturalism on Nursing Schools

- Diverse educational backgrounds and perspectives among faculty:
  - Helps Saudi nursing schools to build their curricula
  - Improves the quality of education
  - Exposes Saudi students to different methodologies, teaching styles, backgrounds, and experiences.
Theme 4: Impact of Multiculturalism on Nursing Schools

- Multiculturalism can be enriching
  - Exposure to variety of perspectives can positively impact the level of students, faculty success, and research production.
  - One of the participants shared, “Once diversity issues are handled, the quality of school performance can be improved.”
Highlights from the Study

- Deans are a primary influence in shaping the culture of their schools.
- Deans experience challenges and benefits from leading a diverse workforce.
- Deans, particularly the novice deans, are recommended to attend leadership training programs.
- Deans must use various leadership strategies to meet faculty needs and desires.
- Diversity exposes all faculty and students to a broader perspective that can improve knowledge, experience, and communication skills.
Thank You...
References


References


References


• Shieh, H., Mius, M. E., & Waltz, C. F. (1989). Nursing Faculty Job Satisfaction in Taiwan, 40(5).

