


The effects of emotionally intelligent leadership behaviour on emergency staff nurses' workplace empowerment and organizational commitment

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to test a model examining the relationships among emergency nurses' perceptions of supervisor emotionally intelligent leadership behaviour, structural empowerment and affective organizational commitment using Kanter's theory of structural power in organizations. The current and projected shortage of nurses challenges health care administrators to consider strategies to enhance retention and recruitment, especially in specialty units particularly vulnerable to turnover. Nurse leader behaviour can have a significant impact in creating quality workplaces for nurses (Canadian Nursing Advisory Committee, 2002). Kanter (1977, 1993) asserts that having access to strong interpersonal relationships, information, support, resources, and opportunities empowers employees to accomplish meaningful work. As a result, employees have greater satisfaction with their work and the organization. A predictive, non-experimental design was used to examine the proposed relationships. A random sample of 300 emergency staff nurses working in acute care hospitals in Ontario was drawn from the provincial registry list. Participants were asked to complete the Emotional Competency Inventory (HayGroup, 2006), the Conditions for Work Effectiveness Questionnaire-II (Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, & Wilk, 2001) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire Affective Subscale (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). The final sample consisted of 206 nurses (response rate = 73%). Through path analysis, the fully mediated hypothesized model was supported ($\chi^2 = 2.3$, $df = 1$, $CFI = .99$, $IFI = .99$, $RMSEA = .08$) with all paths significant. Perceived emotionally intelligent leadership behaviour had a strong direct effect on structural empowerment ($\beta = .54$) which, in turn, had a strong direct effect on affective commitment ($\beta = .61$). Results of this study provide support for Kanter's theory highlighting the importance of leadership behaviour influencing working conditions for nurses as well as organizational effectiveness. 

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