Leadership effectiveness, managerial competencies and knowledge management among the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University

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Abstract

In this study, the descriptive research approach is employed to delineate the attributes of specific groups, particularly in the examination of Leadership Effectiveness within the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University. Leadership Effectiveness were assessed in terms of Program & Project Management, Financial Management, Service Delivery & Innovation, Change Management, Knowledge Management, HR Empowerment, Communication Skills, Honesty & Integrity, Leadership& Influence, and Clients Care Management. Using a descriptive survey research design, data were collected from hospital employees through a structured survey. The respondents of this study were a total of 385 respondents working in Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University. The participants were selected through purposive sampling. Key findings revealed that competencies in leadership and influence, financial management, and project oversight were significantly associated with effective leadership. However, honesty and integrity ranked lower among the competencies, suggesting an area for potential development. This research contributes new insights into the competencies that support effective hospital leadership, emphasizing the importance of tailored training and empowerment strategies for healthcare leaders. Based on these findings, the study recommends implementing targeted leadership development programs to strengthen competencies in ethics and integrity, fostering a more transparent and trusted healthcare environment.

Keywords: leadership effectiveness, human resource empowerment, leadership influence, healthcare management

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1. Introduction

Effective leadership in healthcare organizations is essential for providing high-quality patient care and ensuring smooth operations. In hospital settings, leadership is particularly challenging due to the complex and demanding nature of healthcare delivery. Leaders in hospitals must balance administrative responsibilities, provide strategic direction, and foster a supportive environment for healthcare professionals. This requires a unique set of competencies that go beyond clinical expertise, encompassing managerial skills, interpersonal abilities, and a deep understanding of knowledge management practices to navigate the fast-paced and evolving healthcare landscape.

Leadership effectiveness in hospitals is crucial for ensuring the delivery of high-quality healthcare services, maintaining a positive work environment, and achieving organizational goals. Hospital leaders need to have a strong foundation in clinical knowledge and skills. Understanding the medical intricacies of the field fosters trust and credibility among healthcare professionals. Clear and transparent communication is vital in a hospital setting. Leaders must effectively communicate with diverse stakeholders, including medical staff, administrative teams, and patients, to ensure everyone is on the same page and informed.

Leadership effectiveness is essential in healthcare institutions as leaders face the challenge of balancing patient care needs, resource constraints, and employee well-being. Effective leadership is often conceptualized as the capacity to drive positive outcomes across a range of domains, including program and project management, financial stewardship, service innovation, change adaptation, knowledge dissemination, and client care. Research suggests that in healthcare settings, leaders who possess and can apply competencies in these areas are better positioned to foster a cohesive, high-performing work environment that supports both quality patient care and organizational resilience (Restivo, et al., 2022).

Effective leaders invest in the professional development of their staff, providing opportunities for training and career advancement. Recognizing and acknowledging the hard work and achievements of employees fosters a positive and motivated workforce. Leaders in healthcare must prioritize patient-centered care. This involves ensuring that all decisions and actions align with providing the best possible care and experience for patients. Chang et al. (2023) presented a study on the energy interconnection network, employing various department and style type assessments. Their research implemented an enterprise strategy to foster organizational innovation.

Upholding high ethical standards is critical in healthcare. Leaders must make decisions that prioritize patient safety, adhere to ethical guidelines, and maintain the trust of both staff and the community. Yan et al. (2022) highlighted the varying impact sizes in research on depression, indicating that studies focusing on depressive mood yielded large effect sizes, whereas those concentrating on depressive behavioral symptoms produced moderate effect sizes. Effective leaders establish clear expectations and performance standards. Regular feedback, performance evaluations, and constructive coaching contribute to continuous improvement among hospital employees. Hospitals occasionally face crises, whether it be a public health emergency or internal challenges. Leaders who can manage crises effectively, making informed decisions under pressure, are essential for organizational resilience. Ouyang et al. (2020) explored the potential positive effects of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCS), emphasizing challenges in economically struggling areas.

In the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University, understanding and enhancing leadership effectiveness is critical to achieving organizational goals. By evaluating leadership performance and its impact on the hospital's operations, this study aims to gain insights into how these elements influence employee motivation, patient care,

and overall hospital efficiency. While there is a substantial body of literature on leadership in healthcare, few studies have specifically addressed leadership effectiveness in the context of university-affiliated hospitals in China. Most research tends to generalize leadership practices across healthcare settings without examining the unique challenges faced by educational hospital environments. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the specific leadership dynamics within the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University, providing a targeted understanding that can guide future improvements in leadership practices within similar institutions.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to investigate the leadership effectiveness, managerial competencies, and knowledge management practices among employees at the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University. Specifically, it sought to address the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, experience in hospital management, and academic qualifications?

2. How do respondents assess the leadership effectiveness of hospital employees?

3. Is there a significant difference in responses regarding leadership effectiveness among the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University when grouped according to demographic profile?

4. Based on the study's results, what action plan can be proposed to enhance leadership effectiveness and managerial competencies within the hospital?

1.2 Literature Review

Hospital leaders should have a strategic vision for the organization's future. This involves setting clear goals, developing plans for growth, and ensuring the hospital's long-term sustainability. Luo and Wang (2021) analyzed a sample of over a thousand private companies in the early 2000s, revealing that politically supported companies tended to contribute more to charitable causes than environmental initiatives. This preference was attributed to the higher costs and restrictions associated with environmental initiatives. Thus, Leaders who possess emotional intelligence can navigate the complex emotions and stressors inherent in healthcare settings. Understanding and empathizing with the challenges faced by both staff and patients contribute to a positive and supportive work environment. Han and Zheng (2019) conducted a survey investigating welfare practices in Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and non-SOEs across 12 cities, utilizing the concept of organizational imprinting to understand variations.

Perez (2021) reported positive relationships between transformational and authentic leadership styles and employee retention. Furthermore, there were positive relationships between organizational commitment and transformational, transactional, and authentic leadership styles, along with positive relationships between transformational and authentic leadership styles and job satisfaction. Moreover, Hospital leaders should promote a collaborative culture among healthcare teams. Sarabi Asiabar et al. (2020) identified eight sub-themes under the primary themes of internal and external causes in their findings. Encouraging teamwork and interdepartmental collaboration helps in achieving better patient outcomes and enhances overall organizational efficiency. The healthcare landscape is dynamic and subject to rapid changes. Effective leaders in hospitals must be adaptable and flexible in responding to emerging trends, new technologies, and changes in healthcare policies.

Program & Project Management: Effective project management in healthcare includes organizing resources, setting clear objectives, and meeting regulatory and quality standards. Leaders proficient in project management are more capable of overseeing the complex projects inherent in healthcare, such as implementing new technologies or improving patient services (Meredith, et al., 2017). These skills allow healthcare institutions to meet evolving patient needs and regulatory demands efficiently.

Financial Management: Financial acumen is crucial as healthcare organizations operate within strict budget constraints and require leaders who can optimize resources without compromising patient care. Effective financial management has been shown to support better resource allocation, cost containment, and long-term financial sustainability, all of which are essential in the healthcare sector (Zuckerman, 2005).

Service Delivery & Innovation: Innovation in service delivery often translates to enhanced patient experiences and improved health outcomes. Leaders who prioritize innovation are better able to implement new healthcare models, such as telemedicine or patient-centered care approaches, contributing to service efficiency and effectiveness (Dearing & Cox, 2018).

Change Management: Healthcare is an ever-evolving field, with frequent changes in technology, regulations, and patient care practices. Effective leaders facilitate smooth transitions and foster adaptability among staff by communicating change goals clearly and providing support throughout the process (Mouazen et al., 2023). Research highlights that well-managed change initiatives contribute to greater employee engagement and higher-quality care (Hiatt & Creasey, 2003).

Knowledge Management: Knowledge management is critical in healthcare, as it supports evidence-based practices and the dissemination of updated medical knowledge across the organization. Leaders who emphasize knowledge sharing help create an environment where healthcare providers stay informed about the latest protocols and best practices, ultimately improving patient outcomes (Davenport & Prusak, 2018).

Human Resource (HR) Empowerment: Empowering healthcare workers improves job satisfaction, reduces burnout, and enhances organizational commitment Tsang, et al., 2022). Leaders who support professional development, encourage autonomy, and value contributions from all staff levels build a motivated and resilient workforce.

Communication Skills: Effective communication is foundational to leadership in healthcare, as it ensures clear direction, builds trust, and supports team cohesion. Leaders with strong communication skills are better able to manage conflicts, convey vision, and engage employees effectively, contributing to a collaborative work environment (Hassan, 2018).

Honesty & Integrity: Integrity in leadership is paramount in healthcare, where ethical considerations directly impact patient well-being. Leaders who exhibit honesty and integrity build trust with staff and patients, creating a culture of transparency and accountability that enhances organizational reputation and patient satisfaction (Mohi Ud Din, & Zhang, 2023).

Leadership & Influence: The ability to influence is central to leadership effectiveness, enabling leaders to inspire, motivate, and guide their teams. Influential leaders foster a shared commitment to the organization's goals and are better able to drive initiatives forward, improving both employee morale and operational efficiency (Northouse, 2021).

Client Care Management: Effective client care management ensures that patient needs are prioritized, and care delivery is coordinated efficiently. Leaders skilled in client care management are adept at balancing clinical priorities with patient expectations, resulting in improved patient satisfaction and loyalty (Bodenheimer & Sinsky, 2014).

Collectively, these competencies contribute to a robust leadership framework within healthcare settings, enhancing the overall capacity of the organization to meet both its operational and patient care objectives. Leaders who are well-rounded in these areas can adapt to healthcare's complexities, prioritize ethical decision-making, and foster innovation, ultimately driving the institution toward sustained excellence in patient care.

2. Research methodology

Research Design - Descriptive research serves as the chosen design in this study, with the objective of depicting the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. It commonly addresses questions pertaining to the nature, location, timing, and manner of the subject under investigation. In this study, the descriptive research approach is employed to delineate the attributes of specific groups, particularly in the examination of Leadership Effectiveness within the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University. Descriptive research makes it a practical choice, particularly for researchers operating with limited resources.

Participants of the Study - The respondents of this study were a total of 385 respondents working in Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University. The participants were selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of sampling in which participants are selected based on their knowledge, experience, or expertise on the topic of the study.

Data gathering Instrument - The research instrument for this study was adapted from various sources. Part 1 - Demographic profile of the Respondents. This section gathers demographic information about the respondents based on gender, age, experience in hospital and academic qualifications. Part II gathers information to assess the level of leadership effectiveness where it underwent a pilot test involving a small sample of respondents to verify the clarity and comprehensibility of the questions. This preliminary test aimed to identify and address any areas requiring clarification or revision. The reliability assessment results indicate that the instrument exhibits a satisfactory and acceptable Cronbach alpha value of 0.913 for leadership management has strong or excellent internal consistency, affirming its suitability for use in the study.

Data Gathering Procedure and Data Analysis - Data for this research were gathered via an anonymous and confidential survey focusing on Leadership Effectiveness within the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University. The survey was conducted online among the respondents, with the survey link distributed through various channels, including email, social media. The data collected from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics. This allowed the researchers to describe the characteristics of the population of respondents. All analyzes were performed using SPSS version 26. Frequency and Percentage was used to present the profile of respondents concerning gender, age, experience in hospital management, and academic qualifications. Mean, Standard Deviation and ranking was used to assess the Assess how respondents perceive the Leadership Effectiveness of hospital employees. Meanwhile. Mann-Whitney U test for two groups and Kruskal Wallis test for more than two groups were used as part of the non-parametric tests to determine the significant differences on the responses to Leadership Effectiveness based on demographic profiles such as gender, age, experience in hospital management, and academic qualifications.

Ethical Consideration - The study adhered to the following ethical considerations: Participants provided informed consent before engaging in the study. This process involved informing participants about the study's purpose, procedures, and the associated risks and benefits. Confidentiality measures were implemented to safeguard participants' identities; their names and any other identifiable information were kept confidential. Participants were not remunerated for their involvement; however, they were apprised that their participation could contribute to enhancing comprehension of Leadership Effectiveness within the hospital setting.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondent's demographic profile in terms of the gender, age, experience in hospital management and academic qualifications. It shows that there are nearly equal distribution of gender, it's just that male dominates than female. Majority of the respondents are ages 36 to 35 years old with the frequency of 133 representing the 35% of the respondent. As to the experience in hospital management, mostly are above 10 years with the frequency of 190 representing the 49% of the respondent. Lastly, as to academic qualifications, majority are above bachelor degree with the frequency of 307 representing

the 80% of the respondent.

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage distribution for Demographic Profile

Profile Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	195	51%
	Female	190	49%
Age	25-35 years old	103	27%
	36 to 45 years old	133	35%
	46 to 55 years old	101	26%
	55 years old and above	48	13%
Experience in hospital management	Less than two years	21	6%
	3-10 years	174	45%
	Above 10 years	190	49%
Academic qualifications	Bachelor's degree	307	80%
	Post graduate diploma	59	15%
	Master's degree	19	5%

Table 2
Assessment on Leadership Effectiveness

Indicators	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation	Rank
Program & Project Management	2.39	1.25	Good	4
Financial Management	2.39	1.29	Good	5
Service Delivery & Innovation	2.37	1.27	Good	3
Change Management	2.42	1.31	Good	8
Knowledge Management	2.47	1.32	Good	9
HR Empowerment	2.35	1.27	Good	2
Communication Skills	2.40	1.29	Good	6
Honesty & Integrity	2.48	1.29	Good	10
Leadership& Influence	2.33	1.27	Good	1
Clients Care Management	2.39	1.34	Good	7
Composite Mean	2.40	1.02	Good	

Legend: 1.00-1.79 - Excellent; 1.80-2.59- good; 2.60-3.39 - fair; 3.40-4.19 - poor ; 4.20-5.00 - Very poor

Table 2 presents the assessment on the leadership effectiveness among hospital managers. The respondents generally assessed the leadership effectiveness as good as denoted by its composite mean value of 2.40 and standard deviation of 1.02.

Among the indicators, top on the ranking are Leadership and Influence (Mean=2.33; SD=1.27) , HR Empowerment (Mean= 2.35; SD=1.27), Service Delivery & Innovation (Mean= 2.37; SD=1.27), Program and Project Management (Mean= 2.39; SD=1.25), Financial Management (Mean= 2.39; SD=1.29). All of these were interpreted as good. This reveals that Leaders who are strong in "Leadership and Influence" are likely skilled in strategic decision-making. Hospitals require leaders who can make informed and forward-thinking decisions that positively impact patient care, operational efficiency, and overall organizational success. Effective leaders often excel in providing a clear vision and direction for the organization. In a hospital setting, the ability to articulate and communicate a compelling vision for healthcare delivery can inspire and align the efforts of the entire team. Successful hospital managers excel in building and motivating teams. This includes creating a positive work culture, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that staff members are motivated to deliver high-quality healthcare services. Han and Zheng (2019) conducted a survey investigating welfare practices in Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and non-SOEs across 12 cities, utilizing the concept of organizational imprinting to understand variations. Transparent and effective communication is essential within a hospital environment. Effective leaders establish clear expectations and performance standards. Hospital leaders should have a strategic vision for the organization's future. This involves setting clear goals, developing plans for growth, and ensuring the hospital's long-term sustainability. Luo and Wang (2021) analyzed a sample of over a thousand private companies in the early 2000s, revealing that politically supported companies tended to contribute more to charitable causes than environmental initiatives.

Meanwhile, least among the indicators are Honesty and Integrity (Mean=2.48; SD=1.29), Knowledge Management (Mean= 2.47; SD=1.32), Change Management (Mean= 2.42; SD=1.31), Clients Care Management (Mean= 2.39; SD=1.34), Communication skills (Mean= 2.40; SD=1.29). Even low ranking, still, all of these were interpreted as good. The culture within the hospital may influence how honesty and integrity are perceived. If there is a lack of transparency or ethical issues within the organization, it could impact how these qualities are assessed. Leaders are often faced with ethical dilemmas. If there are instances where hospital managers are perceived as making decisions that compromise ethical standards, it could lead to a lower ranking in the assessment. Thus, To address the lower ranking, it may be beneficial for the hospital to conduct a more detailed analysis, including feedback sessions, surveys, and interviews with stakeholders. This can help identify specific areas of concern and implement targeted strategies for improvement in leadership integrity and effectiveness. Training programs, transparent communication, and a commitment to ethical decision-making can contribute to rebuilding trust and improving the perception of honesty and integrity among hospital managers. Upholding high ethical standards is critical in healthcare. Leaders must make decisions that prioritize patient safety, adhere to ethical guidelines, and maintain the trust of both staff and the community. Yan et al. (2022) highlighted the varying impact sizes in research on depression, indicating that studies focusing on depressive mood yielded large effect sizes, whereas those concentrating on depressive behavioral symptoms produced moderate effect sizes. Leaders are required to communicate clearly with diverse stakeholders, including medical staff, administrative teams, and patients, ensuring that everyone is well-informed and aligned. According to Perez (2021), positive correlations were observed between transformational and authentic leadership styles and employee retention.

Table 3

Significant Difference on Leadership Effectiveness when grouped according to profile

Leadership Effectiveness	H/U	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Gender	16960	0.151	Retain Ho	Not Significant
Age	4.298	0.231	Retain Ho	Not Significant
Experience in hospital management	0.826	0.662	Retain Ho	Not Significant
Academic qualifications	1.933	0.38	Retain Ho	Not Significant

Table 3 presents the results of the analysis conducted to determine if there are significant differences in perceptions of leadership effectiveness when respondents are grouped according to demographic profiles: gender, age, experience in hospital management, and academic qualifications. The analysis utilized statistical tests to compare responses, with a significance level set to determine if the null hypothesis (Ho) should be retained or rejected.

For gender, the calculated test statistic was 16,960 with a p-value of 0.151, leading to the retention of the null hypothesis. This suggests that there was no significant difference in perceptions of leadership effectiveness based on the gender of respondents. This finding indicates that both male and female employees within the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University generally held similar views on leadership effectiveness, implying that gender does not notably influence how leadership is perceived in this context.

Regarding age, the test statistic was 4.298 with a p-value of 0.231, which also led to the retention of the null hypothesis. This result implies that respondents' age groups did not significantly impact their views on leadership effectiveness. This finding may suggest that leadership qualities are either consistently valued across age groups or that the hospital's leadership practices appeal broadly to employees of varying ages, without creating divergent perceptions based on this demographic factor.

For experience in hospital management, the test statistic was 0.826 with a p-value of 0.662, again leading to the conclusion that there is no significant difference. This indicates that respondents' varying levels of experience in hospital management did not significantly influence their views on leadership effectiveness. This may reflect that leadership effectiveness is recognized similarly across all levels of management experience, suggesting that the hospital's leadership practices may be perceived as effective regardless of the respondent's

length of experience.

Finally, for academic qualifications, the test statistic was 1.933 with a p-value of 0.380, which retained the null hypothesis, indicating no significant difference in perceptions of leadership effectiveness based on respondents' educational backgrounds. This finding suggests that employees with different academic qualifications generally perceive leadership effectiveness in a similar way, possibly due to shared standards or expectations for leadership within the hospital setting.

Overall, the analysis indicates that demographic factors such as gender, age, experience in hospital management, and academic qualifications do not significantly impact how leadership effectiveness is perceived by employees at the Affiliated Hospital of Chifeng University. This result may suggest a cohesive understanding or acceptance of leadership practices across diverse groups within the hospital, which could be seen as a positive indication of inclusivity and consistency in leadership impact. These insights can guide the development of a targeted action plan, focusing on reinforcing effective leadership practices that resonate well across demographic groups.

Table 4.

Proposed Action Plan for improvement

Key Result Ares Objectives	Strategies	Person/s Involved	Desired Outcome
Honesty & Integrity To enhance leadership effectiveness in terms of Honesty and Integrity, fostering a culture of trust and ethical conduct within the hospital leadership.	Leadership Integrity Workshops: Conduct workshops focused on ethical leadership, emphasizing the importance of honesty and integrity. Incorporate Ethical Scenarios in Training: Integrate ethical scenarios into leadership training programs to provide practical insights into decision-making aligned with honesty and integrity. Establish Ethical Guidelines: Develop and communicate a comprehensive set of ethical guidelines for hospital leaders, outlining expectations for honesty and integrity. Leadership Accountability Measures: Implement accountability measures for leaders, ensuring that honesty and integrity are core components of performance evaluations.	Human Resources Department Legal and Compliance Professionals Leadership Development Team Executive Leadership Team:	Leaders demonstrate a heightened awareness of the importance of honesty and integrity in their decision-making processes. A culture of trust and ethical conduct is established, contributing to improved morale and employee satisfaction. Reduced instances of ethical violations and a proactive approach to addressing potential issues. Enhanced reputation of the hospital as a trustworthy and ethically responsible institution within the community.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The data reveals a nearly equal gender distribution among respondents, though males slightly outnumber females. Most respondents fall within the age range of 36 to 45, with 133 individuals, or 35% of the sample, in this category. Regarding hospital management experience, a significant portion (49%) have over 10 years of experience, with 190 respondents in this group. In terms of academic qualifications, the majority hold degrees beyond a bachelor's level, with 307 respondents (80%) in this category. Leadership effectiveness is crucial in healthcare institutions, as it ensures high-quality service delivery, a positive work environment, and the achievement of organizational goals. Effective leaders in hospitals require a strong clinical foundation, as this expertise fosters trust and credibility among healthcare professionals. Among the leadership effectiveness indicators, "Leadership and Influence" ranked highest, while "Honesty and Integrity" ranked lower. Based on these findings, an action plan was proposed to enhance leadership effectiveness in the hospital.

It is recommended for Human Resources and Department Heads, may Implement targeted training programs to enhance specific managerial competencies, focusing on areas identified for improvement. These Develop training initiatives addressing perceived knowledge management barriers, specifically targeting staff responsible for information system utilization and access. Executive Leadership Team and the Human Resources department may invest in leadership development programs to enhance leadership effectiveness, focusing on competencies

contributing to organizational culture and quality improvement. Emphasize the importance of leadership support in fostering a positive knowledge management culture, highlighting this need in communications to the top-tier leadership. Further Researchers may explore in-depth the specific experiences in hospital management influencing knowledge management practices to inform targeted interventions. Investigate the potential impact of other demographic factors or organizational characteristics on leadership effectiveness, assigning this task to the Research and Development department in collaboration with Human Resources.

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