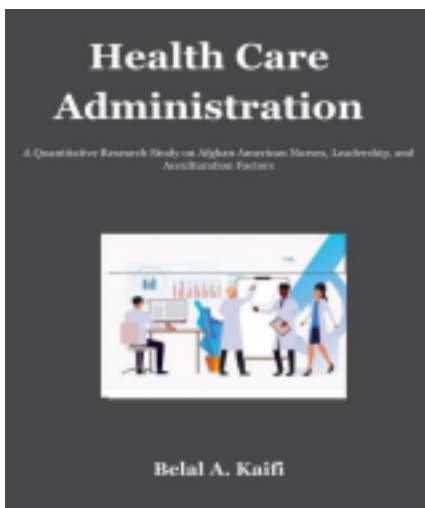




Book Review



Health Care Administration: A Quantitative Research Study on Afghan American Nurses, Leadership, and Acculturation Factors

Belal A. Kaifi, Ph.D., Ed.D.
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There is a growing number of Afghan Americans entering into the healthcare profession who have had to repress their traditions and culture to better assimilate with the dominant culture. Maryam Aseel (2003) mentioned how career advancement was a distant goal (for Afghan refugees), and became something that parents eventually wished for their children rather than for themselves. According to Kaifi (2021), “most Afghan Americans have lived in the U.S. for at least 20 to 30 years and, as a result, may have been influenced by the dominant culture” (p. 34). Because of this, most Afghan Americans have to conform to the norm of society to best achieve career development, job choice and satisfaction, and career outcomes.

The impact of acculturation on leadership style is an important topic for the global community. Acculturation is one of the frequently used variables in career development research because of its significance to many aspects of career development for immigrants. As of 2019, no research on Afghan American registered nurses (RNs) working in the US healthcare system existed in the literature.

In American society, there is a huge dilemma for immigrants and refugees adapting to the dominant culture and deciding how much of their cultural identity they can maintain. In the healthcare industry, it is important to understand how Afghan Americans develop their leadership style to best examine the cross-cultural differences. The author of this book has created a groundbreaking and research-oriented book by the name of “*Healthcare*

Administration: A Quantitative Research Study on Afghan Nurses, Leadership, and Acculturation Factors” which is trailblazing the scope of healthcare professionals and leaders in the modern era. In his introduction, the author refers to the United States as the “melting pot” or as the land of opportunity, meaning that millions of people around the world have migrated to America for a better life (p. 1). In order to attain the dream, each individual has to set their culture, traditions, and customs aside to best conform to their work environment.

The goal of this investigation was to learn about the perceived leadership style of Afghan American registered nurses who work in the US healthcare system based upon a number of acculturation factors. The variables of interest in this study were *sex*, *generation*, *work experience*, and *acculturation levels* to see their influence on perceived leadership style.

The quantitative research emphasized the importance of leader effectiveness among different variables such as gender, sex, and generation. The two leadership styles (task-oriented vs. relationship-oriented) in the study differed between men and women; women being more relationship-oriented and men being more task-oriented. Kaifi (2021) found, “In many collectivist cultures and traditions, men are expected to be more task-oriented while women are expected to be more relationship-oriented” (p. 8). By exploring the leadership orientation styles, we are able to understand the traditional differences between leadership styles among Afghan men and women in the workforce. According to Aslami (2011) and Hoodfar (2007), “There is evidence in the literature that Afghan men are conditioned to focus more on tasks and Afghan women are conditioned to focus more on building and maintaining relationships both inside and outside of the house.”

A quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive-correlational design using primary retrospective data (the actual data needs to be here) was employed in this study.

Hence, by acknowledging the differences between the two leadership styles, we can see the significance of this study. The author is able to provide insight into the working styles of Afghan Americans which correlates to their culture, gender, sex, and generation. Further, Kaifi (2021) states, “the first delimitation of this research was the decision to study the effect of acculturation on leadership among persons of Afghan descent” (p. 56). Studying the predictors of leadership style of Afghan American nurses helps us evaluate the likelihood of workers to obtain more administrative and leadership roles for career development purposes. It also measures the connection between leadership styles and cultural values with the U.S. healthcare setting.

The growing number of Afghan leaders in the healthcare sector is an important indicator of career development from immigrant and refugee families settling in the United States due to the 1979 Soviet invasion. This basis serves as the foundation for Kaifi’s (2021) research study – “The reasoning behind this is that most Afghan families who fled Afghanistan in the 1980s came to the U.S. without knowing the American culture or language and dealt with culture shock” (p. 8). Correspondingly, the younger generation born after the settlement, have a more Americanized attitude towards leadership style. Because of this, Generation Y have become acculturated to the dominant culture thus leading to a less traditional style of leading.

The results showed that task-oriented leadership correlated significantly with American acculturation, years of nursing experience, and participant sex. Task-oriented leadership was most strongly associated with the male sex, followed by years of nursing experience, generation, and Afghan acculturation. Relationship-oriented leadership correlated significantly with all five predictor variables (American acculturation, Afghan acculturation,

generation, nursing experience, and participant sex), whereas relationship-oriented leadership was predicted by acculturation and sex.

There are several styles of leadership. This is significant due to the pivotal role leaders have to elevate and enhance the way healthcare professionals perform on a job. Understanding the traditional framework of Afghan working styles will help prevent hurdles for more advanced roles within the U.S. health system. According to Kaifi (2021), “The study may potentially help prevent obstacles and barriers for Afghan American nurses seeking promotions, administrative positions, or career advancement working in the U.S. healthcare system by raising individual awareness of their own leadership styles” (p. 96). Moreover, it helps shed light on an emerging subject matter of cultural competence and stresses the importance of developing programs that focus on retention and career advancement for the next generation of healthcare leaders.

Implications, limitations, and directions for future research were discussed. Due to the constantly changing nursing field and high demand for healthcare administrators, nursing curriculum should emphasize the importance of leadership skills. Hospitals should consider implementing more training courses and opportunities for nurses to develop their leadership skills. Future researchers should consider comparing American nurses with Afghan American nurses among similar nursing settings and with similar job titles.

This book is useful for students, professors, researchers, managers, healthcare professionals, and beyond as it explores the challenges that many immigrants and refugees face when entering the workforce, while trying to adapt to the customs of the dominant culture.