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عنوان البحث

Master's Research Proposal: Effectiveness of a Leadership Development Program in Enhancing Hospital Managers' Awareness of Strategic and Operational Risks Related to Costing, Coding, and Revenue Cycle Management in Phase Three of Saudi Health Transformation

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العام الدراسي:

1. Introduction

The healthcare sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is undergoing an unprecedented strategic transformation as part of Vision 2030 and the Health Sector Transformation Program, aiming to build a comprehensive, efficient, and sustainable healthcare system. This transformation involves multiple phases, each with its unique challenges and requirements. As the sector progresses towards Phase Three of the Health Transformation, the importance of financial and operational aspects that demand deep and precise understanding from hospital leaders becomes increasingly critical. Key requirements in this phase include Costing, Coding, and Revenue Cycle Management, which are fundamental pillars for ensuring financial sustainability and operational efficiency of healthcare institutions under new funding models and governance structures.

Hospital managers bear a pivotal responsibility in leading their organizations through these changes. This requires them to identify and comprehend the strategic and operational risks associated with these new requirements. The extent of these managers' awareness of these risks, and their ability to make informed decisions based on this awareness, critically impacts the hospital's financial and operational performance, and consequently, the achievement of the desired transformation goals. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a specially designed leadership development program in enhancing hospital managers' awareness of these specific risks, and its reflection on the efficiency of their strategic decisions and the improvement of financial and operational performance indicators related to these vital areas.

2. Problem Statement

With the accelerating pace of health transformation in Saudi Arabia and the transition to Phase Three, healthcare institutions face increasing challenges in implementing the complex requirements of costing, medical coding, and revenue cycle management. These requirements are not merely technical procedures; they inherently carry significant strategic and operational risks if not handled with sufficient awareness and understanding by senior leadership. For instance, a lack of precise understanding of new coding mechanisms can lead to substantial financial losses due to claim denials, poor costing management can affect hospital sustainability, while an inefficient revenue cycle can impede essential cash flows for operations.

The problem lies in a potential gap between the urgent need for a high level of awareness among hospital managers regarding these specialized risks and the actual level of this awareness, which may be insufficient to navigate the complexities of this phase. Leaders often lack targeted training that links the aspects of health transformation with its specific financial and operational risks in the areas of costing, coding, and revenue cycle management. Consequently, a deficit in this awareness can lead to ineffective decision-making, resistance to change, or missed opportunities, negatively impacting hospitals' financial and operational performance and hindering the progress of health transformation.

3. Significance of the Study

This study derives its significance from several key aspects:

- * **National Strategic Importance:** The study directly contributes to supporting the success of the Health Sector Transformation Program and Saudi Vision 2030 by addressing a critical challenge related to empowering healthcare leaders in a pivotal phase (Phase Three).

- * **Practical Importance:** The study provides actionable and applicable recommendations for policymakers in the Ministry of Health and relevant authorities (e.g., Insurance Authority, Health Clusters) on how to design effective leadership development programs to enhance hospital managers' awareness of specific risks, leading to improved financial and operational performance of hospitals.

- * **Academic Importance:** The study fills a gap in the research literature by exploring the relationship between leaders' awareness of specialized risks (costing, coding, revenue cycle management) within the context of major healthcare transformations, and by evaluating the effectiveness of training interventions in this domain.

- * **Organizational Importance:** The study's findings can help hospitals identify knowledge gaps among their leaders and direct training and development efforts towards building the necessary competencies to manage the complex risks of this phase.

4. Study Objectives

- * **Main Objective:** To measure the effectiveness of a specially designed leadership development program in enhancing hospital managers' awareness of the strategic and operational risks associated with implementing costing, coding, and revenue cycle management requirements within Phase Three of the Health Transformation in Saudi Arabia, and its reflection on the efficiency of their strategic decisions and the improvement of hospitals' financial and operational performance indicators.

- * **Sub-objectives:**

- ✓ To determine the initial level of hospital managers' awareness of strategic and operational risks related to costing, coding, and revenue cycle management before participating in the leadership development program.
- ✓ To design and deliver a specialized leadership development program aimed at raising hospital managers' awareness of the risks.
- ✓ To measure the change in hospital managers' awareness level of these risks after their participation in the leadership development program.
- ✓ To assess the impact of the leadership development program on the efficiency of strategic decisions made by managers concerning costing, coding, and revenue cycle management.
- ✓ To analyze the reflection of this change in awareness on the improvement of financial and operational performance indicators related to costing, coding, and revenue cycle management in the hospitals managed by these managers.

- ✓ To identify the main challenges faced by managers in enhancing their awareness and applying the acquired knowledge.
- ✓ To provide practical recommendations derived from the study's findings to improve future awareness and leadership development programs in the healthcare sector.

5. Research Questions

* **Main Question:** To what extent does a specially designed leadership development program effectively enhance hospital managers' awareness of the specific strategic and operational risks associated with the Third Phase of the Health Transformation in Saudi Arabia, and how does this awareness impact the efficiency of their strategic decisions and the improvement of their hospitals' operational performance indicators related to these requirements?

Sub-questions:

* What is the initial level of hospital managers' awareness of strategic and operational risks related to costing, coding, and revenue cycle management before implementing the leadership development program?

* What is the change in hospital managers' awareness level of strategic and operational risks related to costing, coding, and revenue cycle management after their participation in the leadership development program?

* Does the leadership development program impact the efficiency of strategic decisions made by managers concerning costing, coding, and revenue cycle management?

* Does the leadership development program contribute to the improvement of financial and operational performance indicators related to costing, coding, and revenue cycle management in hospitals?

* What are the main challenges faced by hospital managers in enhancing their awareness and applying the acquired knowledge within the context of Phase Three health transformation requirements?

Study Hypotheses

Based on the research questions and theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are formulated:

* **Main Hypothesis:** There is a statistically significant positive effect of the leadership development program on enhancing hospital managers' awareness of strategic and operational risks associated with implementing costing, coding, and revenue cycle management requirements within Phase Three of the Health Transformation.

7. Previous Studies (Summarized)

This section summarizes relevant previous studies to identify what has been accomplished and the research gaps.

7.1. Studies Related to Health Transformation in Saudi Arabia:

Studies (e.g., Al-Amri, 2021; Al-Shammari et al., 2022; Al-Hazmi, 2023) indicate that health transformation in Saudi Arabia faces organizational challenges, resistance to change, skill gaps, and financial pressures due to new funding models. These studies confirm the importance and general challenges of the transformation but do not delve into leaders' awareness of specific risks in particular phases or the effectiveness of targeted interventions.

7.2. Studies Related to Risk Management in the Healthcare Sector:

Studies (e.g., Smith & Jones, 2019; Chen et al., 2020; Al-Khalidi, 2021) emphasize the importance of implementing Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and leaders' awareness of it to enhance organizational resilience and reduce incidents. However, these studies often address risks broadly and do not focus on risks arising from major transformations or those related to specific financial and operational aspects.

7.3. Studies Related to Costing, Coding, and Revenue Cycle Management in Healthcare:

Studies (e.g., Johnson & White, 2018; Lee et al., 2021; Al-Zahrani, 2020; Brown & Green, 2022) have shown that accurate coding and efficient revenue cycle and cost management are crucial for hospitals' financial performance. They indicate that a lack of awareness and expertise hinders the full utilization of these systems. Yet, these studies often focus on technical or analytical aspects and do not directly address leaders' awareness of these risks within the context of health transformation or the impact of training interventions.

7.4. Studies Related to Leadership Role and Development in the Context of Change:

Studies (e.g., Yukl, 2013; Fullan, 2016; Garcia & Rodriguez, 2020) affirm that leaders' awareness of the environment and risks is fundamental for effective strategic decision-making, and that specially designed leadership development programs can improve performance. However, these studies do not specifically focus on leaders' awareness of very specific risks (like Costing, Coding, RCM) within a particular phase of health transformation, or measure the direct impact of a targeted training program on this awareness and its effect on financial and operational performance.

7.5. Research Gap Addressed by the Study:

Based on the review, the current study aims to fill a research gap by:

1. Focusing on Targeted Leadership Awareness: Analyzing leaders' awareness of specialized risks in Costing, Coding, and Revenue Cycle Management.
2. Specificity to Phase Three of Saudi Health Transformation: Linking risk awareness to a specific national context and a particular phase of transformation.

3. Intervention (Quasi-Experimental) Methodology: Measuring the effectiveness of a leadership development program in enhancing this awareness and its impact on performance, providing stronger evidence of causality.

4. Direct Link between Awareness, Decisions, and Financial/Operational Performance Indicators: Establishing a clear and direct relationship between enhanced awareness and improved tangible financial and operational performance.

Therefore, this study will contribute to enriching the academic literature and providing valuable practical recommendations for the healthcare sector in Saudi Arabia.

8. Theoretical Framework

The research will draw upon several integrated theoretical frameworks to provide a comprehensive analytical lens for interpreting the relationships between the studied variables:

- * Organizational Change Management Theories: Such as Kotter's 8-Step Change Model or Kurt Lewin's Change Management Model. These theories will help understand the nature of health transformation as an organized process of change, identify the role of leadership in each phase, and how risk awareness can influence the effective management of the change process.
- * Risk Perception Theory: This theory focuses on how individuals (in this case, hospital managers) perceive and evaluate risks. It will help understand the factors influencing managers' awareness of strategic and operational risks related to Costing, Coding, and Revenue Cycle Management, and how a training intervention can alter this perception.
- * Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Frameworks: Such as the COSO ERM framework. This framework provides a comprehensive structure for identifying, assessing, responding to, and monitoring risks at the enterprise level, including strategic and operational risks, which will guide the risk analysis process in the study.
- * Strategic Leadership Theory: This theory emphasizes the role of senior leaders in formulating and implementing strategies, and guiding the organization through complex and changing environments. It will help link managers' risk awareness to their ability to make effective strategic decisions that ensure the hospital's continuity and success during the transformation.
- * Human Capital Theory: This theory supports the idea that investing in the development of skills, knowledge, and capabilities of individuals (through training programs) leads to improved performance and increased value for the organization, which positively reflects on institutional performance.

9. Methodology and Research Methods

- * Research Design: The study will adopt a Quasi-Experimental Design, specifically a "One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design." This design is practical and suitable for organizational settings where it is difficult to control all variables or form random control groups. This design will be implemented through three main stages:

* Pre-test: Collection of initial data from hospital managers regarding their awareness of strategic and operational risks related to Costing, Coding, and Revenue Cycle Management, as well as collecting performance data from their respective hospitals before the leadership development program.

* Intervention: Delivery of the specially designed leadership development program (as detailed in the previous program design section) to the participating hospital managers.

* Post-test: Re-collection of data from the same managers and hospitals after a reasonable period following the program's completion (to allow for the impact to manifest), to compare results with the pre-test and assess changes.

* Study Population: The study population will consist of selective hospital managers (or those in equivalent senior leadership positions, such as CEOs, Medical Directors, Financial Directors, Operations Managers) in governmental hospital (will be determine later) actively participating in Phase Three initiatives of the Health Transformation in Saudi Arabia.

* Study Sample: A purposive sample of hospital managers who agree to participate in the leadership development program and all data collection stages will be selected. The sample should be as representative governmental and sizes. The sample size will be determined based on available resources, coordination with relevant authorities, and statistical analysis considerations.

10. Study Tools

A combination of tools will be used to collect quantitative and qualitative data to ensure comprehensiveness and depth of analysis:

* Questionnaire:

✓ For Pre- and Post-Awareness Measurement:.

✓ Semi-structured Interviews:

✓ Document Analysis and Performance Indicators:

➤ Review of official documents from participating hospitals related to Costing, Coding, and Revenue Cycle Management before and after the intervention. These documents may include:

- Revenue and expenditure reports.
- Cost analysis reports.
- Claim denial rates and collection rates.
- Average days in accounts receivable.
- Hospital strategic and operational plans.

➤ Collection of specific and measurable financial and operational performance indicators from hospitals to assess tangible improvement. Examples of indicators:

- Percentage of revenue collected from insurance claims.
- Average days in accounts receivable.

11. Study Delimitations

* **Temporal Delimitations:** The study will cover a specific timeframe for implementing the leadership development program and collecting data (pre- and post-measurements). This period must be precisely defined after coordination with the target entities, considering the time needed for the intervention's impact on performance to manifest.

* **Geographical Delimitations:** The study will be limited to a specific number of hospital (governmental in a particular geographical region in Saudi Arabia (Makkah), to facilitate data collection and intervention implementation.

* **Subject Matter Delimitations:** The study will focus solely on evaluating hospital managers' awareness of strategic and operational risks related to Costing, Coding, and Revenue Cycle Management within the context of Phase Three of the Health Transformation. The study will not address other aspects of health transformation or other types of risks outside this specific focus.

* **Methodological Delimitations:** As a quasi-experimental study rather than a pure laboratory experiment, it may not be possible to control all external variables that could influence managers' awareness or hospital performance during the study period. However, efforts will be made to mitigate these limitations through careful research design, appropriate statistical analysis, and discussion of these factors in the findings.

12. References

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