

Organizational Analysis of Private Nursing Educational Institution in Karachi, Pakistan

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Abstract: *I would like to begin with the words of Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". I strongly believe that in order to transform the coming up generation, the vision, mission and philosophy of an educational organization significantly reflects in the standards teaching and learning culture provided to their learners. In the health sector, nursing profession have undergone through a significant process of diversification from the time of Florence Nightingale. It is extremely crucial that in order to generate quality and professional nurses, educational institutions should focus on coaching the learners based on the growing burden of diseases, and equipping them with future coming up challenges.*

Keywords: Nursing Educational Institution, organizational management, Nursing profession, Karachi

1. Introduction

A sound knowledge base of nursing principles and competency in clinical skills is a crucial pre requisite in ensuring the delivery of safe and high quality nursing care. In order to achieve the goal, nursing academic institutions play a significant role in facilitating students learning, and developing competent and quality nurse leaders who are ready to face the health challenges of twenty first century. Professional progress in nursing profession can result from high standards of nursing institution which provide quality education to the nurses and it is a challenge for them to meet the quality requirement. This paper will highlight on the organizational management of a private nursing institution in Pakistan. In Karachi, there are number of institutions that provide nursing education. Some of them are private where as some belong to public sector.

The facts are examined in light of literature and presented in this paper. The name of the organization is not revealed for the purpose of confidentiality and ethical principles. The first section of the paper will discuss the key elements to manage an educational institution like: its background, mission and vision, governance and administrative structure, organizational policies, curriculum, infrastructure and learning resources. The second section will focus on the strengths and limitations of the institution along with the key areas of improvement and future recommendation.

2. Background

This private school for nursing education was founded and recognized by Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC) in 1986. In 2009, it was promoted to the status of college of nursing (CON). Currently, it is offering eight programs at undergraduate and graduate level to students coming from diverse backgrounds. Degree programs are bifurcated as Bachelors of Science in Nursing which is a 4 year program, 1 year Fast Track Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing and Accelerated Master of Science in Nursing which is a 15 month program. Diploma programs are divided into: Diploma in General Nursing which is spread over 3 years, Diploma in Pupil Midwifery which is an 18 months course offered to fresh candidates with no exposure to nursing, and

1 year Diploma in Nurse Midwifery. The certificate programs are divided into Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) which is a 2 year course and 1 year Paramedical Technician course.

3. Vision and Mission Statement and Organizational Philosophy

All institutions are guided by their philosophy, vision and mission statement. The philosophy of this institution is determined to produce professional and quality nurse leaders and strengthen nursing work force to serve Pakistani population. This college of nursing vision is to establish an institution of distinction that promotes excellence, innovation and critical thinking among nursing graduates. Vision and mission goes hand in hand in every organization. A mission statement declares the purpose of institutional existence (Judie as cited by Billings & Halstead, 2005). The mission of the institution believes in the growth, and advancement of human competencies through the dissemination of knowledge, and application through service. The institution is determined to prepare the nurses to provide high quality care, based on the scientific knowledge through evidence based research, in order to meet the future challenges in health sector. It also assumes the responsibility of demonstrating leadership capacity through its education and research program.

3.1 Governance and Administrative Structure

The college of nursing since its inception is affiliated with a distinctive and reputable private University as it holds the prestige of being a chartered university. According to Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), nursing schools can get affiliation with federal, provincial or local government, and university located in Pakistan (Pakistan Nursing Council, 2009). The institution is recognized by PNC and centrally governed by the chancellor of the university who is the major decision making authority. The chancellor is followed by Vice Chancellor (VC), then the Dean CON heads different program coordinator exercising under the umbrella of CON. The channel of reporting follows the ascending track towards the chancellor. The hierarchy and open channel of reporting with in the CON is the major strength

and the success of this academic institution. However, for major decisions, the nursing division is not autonomous, and looks forward towards central administrative bodies.

Additionally, various committees such as admission and progression, curriculum, disciplinary, sports and recreation and library internally operate in CON in order to monitor the progress of the institution periodically.

3.2 Organizational Policies

Organizational policies functions as the guiding pillar and framework for the smooth operationalization of the institution (Sullivan & Decker, 2002). This section will be described under the header of student admission and progression process and termination policies, code of conduct and then guidance and counseling.

3.3 Student Admission Process

The commencement of admission in any program is advertised through newspaper. Currently, the CON is running eight programs which are recognized by PNC whereas Accelerated Masters of Science in Nursing Program needs to be recognized by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC). The final pool of students is selected after the aptitude test, and shortlisted for the interviews, is then discussed in admission committee meeting. The entire process is transparent and exclusively done on the criteria of merit set up by the institute, which is synchronized by PNC as well for enrollment in respective program. This process adds in the trustworthiness and reliability and maintaining the benchmark of the institution. The minimum passing requirement is 50% for entrance in the program. Once the students are enrolled in the program, they are expected to strictly adhere to the various academic, examination, and code of conduct policies which are spelled out differently for undergraduate and graduate programs. They have also set the limit of cumulative grade point average (GPA) of not less than 2.5, required to get an admission in the graduate program; this criteria is in line with PNC guidelines (Pakistan Nursing Council, 2009). PNC is the approval body for enrolling the number of seats in the academic institution. For BScN program is 50 per year and for MScN it is 10 per year. In addition to it, PNC also determines the student to faculty ratio which is 10:1 however, due to shortage of educators the currently ratio is 25:1.

3.3.1 Student Progression Process

Evaluation of student's academic performance plays a significant role in identifying student's progress in the program (Billings & Halstead, 2005). Evaluation records should be well documented, and distinctly mention positive and negative viewpoints of student's academic performance (Billings & Halstead, 2005). Unsatisfactory performance is discussed in program and progression meeting. Student's performance is evaluated by grades and cumulative GPA. Students are progressed in their academia based on the grades from A to D and grade F is considered as fail. As per institution policy, a student should receive a minimum GPA of 2.5 to enroll in the program. If a student fails the course, then resit opportunity is provided, and if persistently functioning unsatisfactory then the student may repeat the

year. Moreover, for master's thesis the criterion is pass and fail. All the students are provided with guide book on the start of the semester, which contains all policies of code of conduct, examination, grading criteria etc. Billings and Halstead (2005) supports this idea that information about grading system should be given pre-hand and should be written in the syllabus.

3.3.2 Student Code of Conduct

Well defined and comprehensive code of conduct policies serves as guideline for the institution and the students to be on a professional roadmap and exemplary for other organizations. This institution has written documents available about student code of conduct explicitly mentioned in guide book. Academic dishonesty and disciplinary issues are handled by disciplinary committee where as sensitive issues if encountered, are dealt by the VC of the university.

3.3.3 Student Guidance and Counseling

Student Advisor occupies a vital position in the life of every student. They play a crucial role in providing guidance and advice to the student for their personal, academic and professional lives. A counselor boosts up student confidence and self-esteem, and teaches necessary tips to maintain personal and professional lives in equilibrium. Therefore, a neutral person should be chosen as student advisor, so that the student can ventilate their worries and apprehensions without fear.

4. Official Record System

It is the institution responsibility to maintain the privacy of the student records. Some of the records that are managed at CON are student's academic records, admission record, examination scores, administrative record, and financial record. Some of the records are present in hard form while some are saved in electronic version.

5. Various Programs and Curriculum

A curriculum can be defined as an action plan or a written document comprising of formal content to be delivered to the learners to achieve desired goals of gaining knowledge (Billings & Halstead, 2005). Formerly, the college commenced with 3 programs, and currently it is dedicated to run eight programs which is a sign of progress and achievement. This institution is following the curriculum of PNC for their academic programs running across the CON. This section will emphasize on the different programs which the institution is offering and their admission criteria. The CON has introduced an Accelerated Master of Science in Nursing program in 2011. It is a 15 months, thesis based program initiated only for 3 years to overcome the shortage of nurses and to get a second line of well-trained faculties for coaching other programs at CON. The eligibility criteria for the candidates is BScN or Post RN BScN degree from PNC registered institution, seven years of experience and a minimum GPA of 2.5. The curriculum of this program is adapted from PNC with exclusion of some of the courses. Another program is four year BScN degree program and the applicants with the level of education equivalent to grade 12 or Intermediate are entitled for this program. Third is a fast

track BScN program which is also open with the admission requirement of diploma in nursing and midwifery along with three years of clinical experience. Diploma in nursing is the fourth program which is existing in the institution since long. The applicants must pass their tenth grade or Matriculation with minimum of 55%. Diploma in Nurse Midwifery and Diploma in Pupil Midwifery are other programs which are being offered for female candidates. Nurse Midwifery diploma is for a period of eighteen months whereas diploma in pupil midwifery is for one year. Apart from the programs there are two licensed certificate program, and those are two year practical nurse program and one year paramedical technician program

5.1 System of Curriculum Review and Improvement

The institution follows the curriculum given by PNC for their academic programs running across CON. The institution has a formal curriculum committee which plays a key role, if there is a dire need to bring a change in the curriculum. The curriculum of the particular course is reviewed for its strengths and weaknesses by the University Academic Council (AC) in the semester break. The Dean, as a representative of CON is the member of AC. Hence, the team of administrator scan facilitate in bringing a substantial impact in the design of the curriculum based on the course feedback given by the students and educators.

5.2 Institutional layout and Facilities

The CON is situated in a building located near a private hospital. The physical layout and the infra-structure can create considerable impression on the minds of general public and leave them to develop image of the noble profession. The present CON functions with all basic utilities, available within the premises. The building consists of well-furnished Dean's office, class rooms equipped with basic furniture and teaching facility such as white board and multimedia and internet linkages, faculty room provided with desktops, administration and finance offices, separate washrooms for male and females students, conference room, pantry etc. There is a small tuck shop for refreshments and a stationary corner where students can get their supplies. Outstation female students reside in hostel located inside the hospital campus.

The learning resource atmosphere provided to the student's facilitates and enhances their learning, exploring and integrating knowledge into skilled capacities.(Billings & Halstead, 2005).The CON possesses well equipped science, skills and computer laboratory, and library. The library is furnished with all the required curriculum text books and few selected nursing journals for student's reference. The students can also link up with HEC digital library comprising of approximately 40, 000 online journals for maximum learning. The computer lab includes computers with internet facility.

Competency and critical thinking in the graduates can be achieved through integrated curriculum, appropriate and innovative use of teaching learning strategies which is incorporated by the facilitator to make interactive learning session (Billings & Halstead, 2005). In CON, comfortable

learning environment was complemented by various learning resources such as multimedia, white board. The concepts which are learned in class can be practically integrated on clinicals. The clinical setting is the place where students can integrate theory and practically apply the learned concepts(Billings & Halstead, 2005). The students are divided in small groups for clinical facilitation based upon course and clinical objectives and expertise of the clinical facilitator.

5.3 Support Services

Recreation helps in neutralizing the rigorous academic burdens expected from the students. It supports to keep them physically and mentally healthy to juggle two worlds effectively. There is large garden for the students where the day begins with traditional assembly format and recitation of prayers. It is also used for recreation and get together purposes and social timeout. The students for minor and major health issues are referred to the nearby hospital where free consultation is provided to the students. Students go through a complete physical and laboratory investigation prior to their admission in the program and should show the fitness certificate.

The students have to bear the costs of their academics; however, if the student requires financial assistance (FA) then the institute has a bond system which is a successful retention strategy. It is mandatory to complete a service agreement requiring the same number of years for which they apply for bond. The approximate fees structure of all the programs are comprehensively described in the college of nursing prospectus.

5.4 Personal and Professional Growth of Student and Faculty

Scholarly activities polish and groom the individual personally as well as professionally. Faculties are encouraged to participate in different seminars, symposiums, conferences, and workshops organized within and outside the campus.The students for their professional hands on and clinical experience are sent to the private hospital which is located near the campus.

6. Faculty Profile and Faculty to Student Ratio

The institution has 16 full time senior nursing instructors, 1assistant senior instructor and instructor and 5 part timer faculties on board. Visiting faculties teach at graduate level where as English course is catered by faculties from English department of the university. The faculties are promoted from instructor to senior instructor based on the appraisals and credentials. Presently the institution is privileged to have 2 MScN graduates teaching MScN program and no Ph.D in nursing prepared faculty. A striking feature which is the strength of this institution is that all the teaching force is Post – RN BScN graduate to date. There are approximately 238 students enrolled in different programs at CON. The number of the students selected at the time of admission is in congruence with the number of seats allocated by PNC in different programs. The student faculty ratio is 1:20 or 1:25 in the nursing programs which is manageable ratio.

6.1 Strengths of the institution

The significant strength of the institution is the commitment and proactive leadership under which the CON has adequately progressed in offering eight nursing educational programs at graduate and undergraduate level in accordance with the need of the country. In spite of many hurdles, CON has added its exemplary contributions in promoting nursing education, which is congruent with its vision and mission.

It has maintained its prestige among the national regulating agencies like PNC and HEC. The CON is involved in the inspection of other nursing private institutes which require accreditation with the prestigious university with which it is affiliated. This not only improves the standard of nursing education for other institutes but is also beneficial for the improvement of CON. In addition, the institute is affiliated with PNC and it has its representation in the regulatory body as the chancellor of the university who is also the president of PNC.

Another commendable strength is the presence of BScN qualified teaching force on board for its various programs of undergraduate, diploma, midwives and technicians. Besides this, the institute is present in the vicinity of a private Hospital which is the main clinical area selected by CON where the students are exposed to diverse health problems for their learning.

7. Areas of Improvement and Recommendation

As the room for improvement is always needed even in the perfectly managed organization, this organization is no exception to that. Some areas are identified which needs improvement and recommendations are presented accordingly.

7.1 Strategic Planning for Accelerated MScN Program

Strategic planning for any educational institute is very much crucial in this competitive environment. Strategic planning in higher education moves the organizations in an innovative direction (Abdullah, 2009). A comprehensive approach for implementing a strategic plan should be adopted in order to have a long lasting impact. Planning process must be robust to have the impact of strategic plan. Despite the fact, that the institute has its deep association with PNC, the accelerated master's program affiliation with HEC is still pending, and this can affect their career, and degree approval of master's graduates who are being educated in the institute. Deviation of the educational programs from the set standards would make the future value of the graduate program at stake and are at threat to be unemployed. Recommendation for this issue is that the Dean CON should take initiative to address this issue in the Board of Studies (BOS) and Academic Council promptly, so that there are no obligations from PNC and HEC on the degrees of the graduates who are looking for a career as instructor in the same institute.

7.2 Proper Succession Planning

A formal succession planning for continuous availability of qualified and experienced teaching faculty is missing for maintaining the educational standard for a long period of time. The institution has 2 masters prepared faculty on board, there is a need to strengthen the leadership with the freshly prepared PhD faculty which can progress the organization towards further success. Succession planning is the deliberate and systematic effort made by organizations to recruit, develop and retain individuals with a range of leadership competencies capable of implementing current and future organizational goals (Lacey, 2003).

The institution should recruit experienced and qualified educators on board. In connection to this, measure for promotion for higher education in existing instructors must be adopted at the policy level. Dias, Ajani and Mithani (2009) identified shortage of well - trained nursing educators as one of the factors of poor operationalization of nursing curricula in Pakistan. According to the requirements of PNC and HEC, there should be PhD faculty for teaching the master's program and those who earn master's degree should teach to baccalaureate program. For this matter, faculty position can be opened to our own MScN alumni to teach in MScN program on attractive packages. Besides this, the institute must utilize the resource of PNC in terms of scholarships for upbringing the educational profile of the teachers. For Deanship and PhD faculties, collaboration can be done with different national and international universities for administration purposes and academic facilitation to the students. International PhD faculty and alumni can conduct online sessions and provide facilitation. The Dean of the organization who owns the doctoral qualification can be of immense benefit for its graduate and under graduate program, and can also participate in the ethical review committee and other decision making boards of the university to bring a change.

7.3 Enrichment Program for students

Another area which needs to work on is the commencement of enrichment program. Though the admission is purely on merit but some student needs a refresher in basic skills in order to complete the program successfully. The prime aim of enrichment program is to groom the student personally and professionally in basic writing skills, science topics, mathematics and English. Finally, students should be evaluated at the end of enrichment program. According to Jeffreys (2001), students completed the enrichment program shared increase in academic outcomes, psychological adjustment, and less withdrawals. This program can be beneficial for the students to cope with the high demands and smooth transition into the actual program.

8. Conclusion

Though the organizational analysis of this private nursing institution was based on observational assessment of a single day visit nevertheless, the success and upliftment to the status of college is the result of proactive leadership and committed workforce working for the institution. This is the

most essential ingredient for generating quality and professional nurses with the growing demand of the time.

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