Appreciative Inquiry-based Organization Development Intervention Process on Satisfaction and Engagement of Senior Patients and Sustainability of Sukavet Institution: A Case Study of Nursing Home

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Abstract - Thailand had a large family with the culture of collectivism in the past history. Currently, the family group has changed from large family to single family. Many elder family members are left alone and nobody takes care of them. Additionally, the Thai health care system has not fully developed like the other developed countries. Thailand has begun the development of elderly care system starting from low to high income social status. Sukavet Nursing Home is the hospice for the elderly patients. The main needs were to increase the satisfaction and engagement of senior patients and create the sustainability of the institution. The final results of this research were that there was a significantly positive increase of the satisfaction and engagement of senior patients/family members, and there was a positively increased sustainable business development of the institution.

Keywords - Appreciative Inquiry, Nursing Home Sustainability, Organization Development Intervention (ODI), Senior Patient Satisfaction and Engagement

I. INTRODUCTION

This action research intended to study the satisfaction and engagement of senior patients and Sukavet Nursing Home’s sustainability utilizing the appreciative inquiry-based ODI process.

The focal system is the Nursing Home. Sukavet Nursing Home was founded as a hospice in May 1998 by a group of retired medical doctors from many hospitals. The founders thought of helping the senior patients who are suffering from Alzheimer, chronic disease, paralysis, disability or final stage of cancer, and palliative care needed or unable to take care of themselves as well as the family members who do not have time to take care of them.

The purpose of founders is to help the society by supporting the senior patients who are unable to take care of themselves to live healthy for their remaining life. Sukavet Nursing Home is registered as a private organization, instead of a not-for-profit organization, because the private institution can operate the business in the most effective and efficient ways in decision-making. As the result, Sukavet Nursing Home emphasizes on the quality care more than monetary profitability basis to support
unprivileged senior patients by offering high quality senior patient care services with 30% lower cost of care, when compared with other nursing homes that provide the same level of quality care services.

This research was limited by the financial support, only in-facility research location, and study timeframe. The limited access of financial resources affected the major improvements and implementations of the organization development intervention process. The researcher study was limited to the observation and discussion of senior patients/family members and staff members who were only in the facility. The researcher did not go outside of the facility at either the patient’s residence or hospital. In addition, the researcher received a permission to conduct the research within the limited timeframe of the study from April 2009 to June 2010.

II. THEORIES RELATED TO THE KEY VARIABLES

A. Organization System and Development

The organization system is the integration of many functions from the human systems to provide a collaborative environment that will help increase the effectiveness and efficiency and presents the system of organization for purposes, structure, relationship, rewards, leadership and helpful mechanism. (Weisbord, 1978)

The organization development is a professional field action and scientific inquiry. The practice of organization development has a wide spectrum of activities. The concept of organization development is an effort of organization problem-solving, and renewal processes for effective and collaborative management of organization culture. The organization development is also a long-term plan process of change to improve the organization problem-solving with a perspective of organization wide plan and system wide process used the assistance of a change agent or catalyst and the theory along with technology of applied behavioral science. It is also interdisciplinary in nature and draws on sociology, psychology, motivation, learning and personality. (Cummings and Worley, 2005)

B. Action Research Organization Development Process

The action research organization development process is a long-range cyclical and self-correcting mechanism of the effectiveness of client system for self-analysis and self-renewal. (Lewin, 1947)

As shown in Figure 2.1, the organization development action research process is a cyclical process of change. The process begins with input or unfreezing when the client and change agent work together with the plan actions. The main elements include preliminary diagnosis, data-gathering, feedback of results and joint action planning. The communication systems are the language system theory.

The second step is the transformation or action (changing) phase. The learning process of role analysis is planned and executed the behavioral changes. The feedback in this phase moves via Feedback Loop A and has the effect of altering previous planning for better alignment with change objectives.

The third or the last stage is the output or result phase. This step includes the actual changes in behavior resulting from the corrective action steps taken following the
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III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON RELATED TOPICS

A. Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

AI is the study and exploration of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best. This approach to personal change and organization change is based on the assumption that questions and dialogs about strengths, successes, values, hopes and dreams are themselves transformational. (Cooperider and Srivastva, 1980) The results are more than rendering the positive problem-solving since the inspiration and appreciation of individual are implemented. AI utilizes the Four-D cycle processes on the discover to identify and appreciate what is, dream to envision of process that works in the future, design to plan and prioritize process that works well, and destiny or deliver to implement or execute of the proposed design.

The concept of building the organization of what works, rather than trying to fix what does not. AI is focused on how to create more the exceptional performance occurring when the core strengths are aligned. It opens the doors to the new opportunities or possibilities. AI has been used extensively to foster change in the business and health care systems.

Sharing what has changed, what is going to be better and/or what could do more to reach our desire future. All these factors help sustain the energy for positive change. The critical step is how to have a continuous improvement cycle of AI.

B. Customer Satisfaction and Engagement

No business or individual can succeed without developing the customer satisfaction management as known as the customer relationship management that leads to the customer loyalty. In contradiction, the customer dissatisfaction or complaint is also a new opportunity to cement relationship and create new customer royalty because the business is realized the feeling of the customers and feels their pains.

Once the business has fulfilled the customer satisfaction, it can move forward to the next level of the customer engagement that extends beyond the satisfaction. Customer Engagement (CE) is an engagement of customers with a company or brand. The engagement leads by either customer or company. The engagement places on the longer term and more strategic context, aiming to encourage the customer loyalty.

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

A. Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical framework philosophy of quality senior patient care, the body is related to physical strength of senior patients, the mind is related to the mentally strength of positive thinking as well as sustainable satisfaction/engagement, and the soul and spirit are related to the spiritual development of unworried life, unattached to substances and living good life. These three aspects of body, mind and soul/spirit are interrelated the total human system as the whole system and developed to the conceptual framework.
The conceptual framework as shown in Figure 4.1 had two layers. The inner layer had four dependent variables (DV) of satisfaction and engagement of senior patients/family members (DV1,2), satisfaction of staff members (medical doctors, nurses, caretakers and administrators) (DV3), and sustainability of nursing home (DV4).

The outer layer had four independent variables (IV) of patient care (IV1), personal relation development (IV2), staff work commitment (IV3), and management & financial support (IV4).

### B. Research Methodology

The qualitative methodology was the observation of researcher guided by the inspection list and focus group discussion. With the application of appreciative inquiry, the interview questions were the value, peak and miracle questions. The value questions created the valuable answers from the respondents, the peak questions were the storytelling method of the most impressive events, and the miracle questions aimed the future expectation. All research respondents were encouraged to initiate their ideas for productive contribution to the nursing home. Later, the researcher proposed to the management for the quality improvement.

The quantitative measurement was from the surveys distributed to the senior patients/family members and staff members to measure their satisfaction before and after the appreciative inquiry-based organization development intervention. The anticipation of response rate was 100% from the total surveys distributed.

The researcher used triangulation to evaluate both qualitative and quantitative results. If the conclusions of both methods were in the same trend, the study was consistent and valid.

Additionally, the research was started from the bottom level of the nursing home that was from the individual level of senior patients, family members and staff members, or group level to the management level. Later, the researcher gathered the data, provided the useful suggestions, and proposed the management level.

### C. Organization Development Interventions

The focus group discussion of quality patient care and staff work commitment was conducted by the researcher. The researcher suggested the two-way communication process by encouraging the individual staff members to initiate and suggest their ideas to their direct supervisor because it is impossible to gather all staff members at one time and have a large focus group discussion. Additionally, the staff members had to provide an attentive care to the senior patients during working hours and it was an unproductive time management to gather a large number of participants in the focus group discussion. The direct suggestions from the individual staff members to their direct supervisor created the leadership skills of each supervisor. Later, each supervisor would summarize their ideas to the director of each department. This process developed the sense of belonging and improved a good communication and relationship among staff members. The researcher also utilized the same method to the senior patients and family members to develop the communication skills and relationships improvement among themselves.
At the same time, the researcher transferred the appreciative inquiry approach knowledge to the staff members as well as the family members. The implementation of two-way communication approach and appreciative inquiry method knowledge transfer increased the positive contributions including efficiency and effectiveness. The appreciative inquiry-based did not disregard the problems but it turned the current identified problems into challenges, the current identified strengths into sustainable competitive advantages/competencies, the current identified weaknesses and threats into new potential opportunities, and the current identified opportunities into new aspirations.

V. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. The Sustainability of Senior Patient Care

The researcher accepted “H1: There is a difference of the satisfaction and engagement of senior patients.” because there was a significant difference between pre and post-organization development intervention of senior patients since both qualitative and quantitative data analysis showed a positive increase of the difference between pre and post-organization development intervention with Appreciative Inquiry-based.

B. The Sustainability of Nursing Home

The researcher also accepted “H1: There is a sustainable business development of the Nursing Home.” since there was a business sustainability between pre and post-organization development intervention of the staff members since the qualitative and quantitative data analysis showed a positive increase of the difference between pre and post-organization development intervention with Appreciative Inquiry-based.

C. Recommendations

Sukavet Nursing Home management was recommended to have future in-depth ODI study for the current and prospective staff members to continuously motivate the vision of “Working Everyday is Like Doing Daily Good Merit.”

The researcher recommended the future ODI, expanding the scope of their senior patient care services to the off-facility care included providing high quality care at patient’s residence and major hospitals. The senior patients admitted inside Sukavet Nursing Home (in-facility senior patients) would be firstly prioritized or reserved for the most needed in terms of critical illness senior patients. Therefore, the nursing home could generate sustainable revenue from providing care services outside the facility.

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