

Managerial Competencies among Nurse Managers at Universitas Sumatera Utara Hospital in Medan, Indonesia

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Abstract: **Background:** Head nurses serve as front-line managers which have complex, important roles in providing health care in hospitals. They have strong influence on quality and patient's outcomes. They are responsible in transform strategic planning and goals defined by head of nursing division into nursing operational plan. The purpose of this study was to explore managerial competencies of nurse managers at Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU) hospital. **Methods:** This study was one cycle of an action research study that was carried out at USU hospital as one of teaching hospital in Medan, Indonesia. Ten nurse managers were involved in this study. Focus group discussion was used to collect data. Transcript verbatim was made after an in-depth FGD and then was analyzed by using content analysis technique. **Results:** This study found 5 domain of managerial competencies of nurse managers at Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU) hospital. They were (1) function of ward management (planning, staffing, organizing, directing, and controlling), (2) management of patient care (identification of patient acuity, collaborating, coordinating, checking patient's status and checking completeness of discharge documents), (3) leadership (decision maker, conflict mediator, lobbying, bargaining), (4) self and staff development (updating knowledge and skills and interpersonal relation), (5) and, function of preceptorship (supervising, teaching, role modeling, selecting case). **Conclusion:** Nurse managers in a hospital have to master a set of managerial competency in order to manage effective daily ward operational. It is recommended that a hospital to set standardized managerial competency for nurse managers as requirements for a nurse to be a nurse manager.

1 INTRODUCTION

Nurses manager in hospitals function as front-line managers who have complex and important roles in health services. As front-line managers in hospitals, nurse managers have a strong influence on the quality of hospital services and patient outcomes. They are responsible for changing the strategic plan and goals set by the nursing field into operational plans. They are also required to be able to play a role in clinical and administrative leadership while being responsible for patient care activities for 24 hours (Thrall, 2006).

Nurse Managers are responsible for creating a safe and healthy environment to support the work of the health care team and contribute to involvement with patients (AONE, 2015). Nurse Managers act as leaders who play an important role in the lives of nurses to ensure quality patient outcomes and are required to have the ability to interpret general

concepts and integrate them into clinical and managerial performance (Chase, 2010).

Nurse Managers in carrying out their duties must have various competencies. In Indonesia, nurse manager competencies are explained in job descriptions based on the Indonesian Ministry of Health standards, one of which is conducting managerial activities and functions in the field of work (PPNI, AIPNI, AIPDiKI, 2012). Managerial competence is a series of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that a person needs to be effective in diverse managerial work (Khadka, Gurung & Chaulagain, 2014). Managerial competence provides valuable value and improves performance in management processes that benefit employees and organizations (Krajcovicova, Caganova & Cambal, 2012).

Krajcovicova, Caganova & Cambal (2012) mentions that there are 4 pillars of managerial competence, namely knowing the organization,

leading and managing people, managing resources, and communicating effectively. Gunawan and Aunguroch (2016) also explained that the nurse managerial competence consists of several components, namely self-development, planning, organizing, leading, managing legal and ethical issues and providing health services.

In general, the managerial competence of nurse managers is still considered lacking. Khadkaarch, Gurung and Chaulagain (2014) found that nurse managers who are currently working in Kathmandu Valley hospitals need to improve their managerial competencies by attending hospital management courses and training. In Indonesia, the nurses of hospital managers are still not many who have educational backgrounds who are equipped with the knowledge and practice of nursing management.

USU Hospital is one of the health services in Medan. All nurse managers at the USU Hospital have a bachelor education background but are relatively long inexperienced in managing nursing services in hospitals. In addition, they also still need to improve their competence as nurse managers. Therefore, the creation of a managerial competency model for nurse managers at the USU hospital is very necessary so that all nurse managers master the managerial competence. The existence of this model is very helpful for the nurse manager so that it can be used as a guide in carrying out his role as a professional nurse manager. The purpose of this study was to explore managerial competencies of nurse managers at USU hospital.

2 METHOD

The research design used in this study is action research. Action research design is suitable to be used to develop a nurse nurse competency model in leading innovation and changes in nursing services at a Universitas Sumatera Utara. The action research method that will be used is a method developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) which consists of 4 phases, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The action research method was chosen in this study because this method can identify problems in practice and offer methods for solving the problems. In addition, action research was chosen in this study with the reason for its potential to help bridge the gap between theory, research and nursing practice.

Participants in this study were all heads of rooms from 10 service units at USU Hospital.

3 RESULTS

The total participants in the study were 10 people where all participants were female, ranging in age from 27 to 40 years and as head of the ward. Demographic data from participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant characteristics.

Characteristic	f	%
Sex		
Female	10	100
Male	0	0
Age		
< 30 years	1	10
31 - 40 years	9	90
Marital status		
Married	10	100
Single	0	0
Education		
Bachelor	9	90
Master	1	10
Years in Hospital		
1 – 5	1	10
6 – 10	8	80
> 10	1	10
Experience as Head Nurse		
1 – 3 years	7	70
4 – 8 years	3	30
Clinical Training		
Never	2	20
1 – 3 years	7	70
4 – 8 years	1	10
Management Training		
Never	7	70
1 – 3 times	2	20
>8 times	1	10
Number of Staff		
1 – 10	1	10
11 – 20	8	80
>20	1	10

This study found 5 domain of managerial competencies of nurse managers at USU hospital. They were (1) function of ward management (planning, staffing, organizing, directing, and controlling), (2) management of patient care (identification of patient acuity, collaborating, coordinating, checking patient's status and checking completeness of discharge documents), (3) leadership (decision maker, conflict mediator, lobbying, bargaining), (4) self and staff development (updating knowledge and skills and interpersonal relation), and (5) function of preceptorship (supervising, teaching, role modeling, selecting case).

3.1 Function of Ward Management

Nurse Managers at USU hospital stated that they have to master 5 functions of ward management planning, staffing, organizing, directing, and controlling in order to carry out their main duties as a nurse manager. These basic competencies are common competencies for all front-line manager in many hospitals around the world. These basic competencies are useful in managing day-by-day nursing service in the ward. Having these basic competencies made the participant more confidence in ensuring completeness of nursing administrative tasks are smoothly run.

3.2 Management of Patient Care

All participants in involving in this study believed that they have to poses competencies related to management of patient care. This competency include identification of patient acuity, collaborating, coordinating, checking patient's status and checking completeness of discharge documents. Even though, direct nursing care for patients are carried out by staff nurses, nurses who serve as in charge nurse also involve in managing patient care. Patient with new admission need to classify into 3 level of care: total care, partial care, or minimum care. A nurse manager also need to collaborate and coordinate patient care with other health care teams. Finally, before patients discharge from the ward, head nurse as manager will check the completeness of discharge document.

3.3 Leadership

Nurse Managers in this study perceived that leadership is very important competency they have to master. This leadership characteristics include

decision maker, conflict mediator, lobbying, and bargaining. These leadership characteristic are required to ensure that all nursing duties in the ward will be effectively employed by staff nurses. By having this characteristic, nurse manager will gain respect and trust from their nurse staff so that they lead the progression of clinical practice in the ward.

3.4 Self and Staff Development

Nurse Managers stated that another competency they need to master is related to self and staff development. These include updating knowledge and skills and interpersonal relation. As a leader in his unit, the nurse manager has an important role in developing the knowledge and skills of both himself and the staff so that they can carry out the latest evidence-based services. They also have to keep abreast of the latest technology and ensure that everything can run and produce positive outcomes for both patients and hospitals.

Nurse managers are also responsible for improving interpersonal relations both among them and also with other health workers. The better interpersonal relations developed by the nursing team in the unit, the better the quality of services provided to patients.

3.5 Function of Preceptorship

USU Hospital is a teaching hospital. Therefore, in addition to providing nursing services for their customers, nurse managers also serve as preceptor for nursing students. This function of preceptorship that covers the nurse manager includes supervising, teaching, role modeling, and selecting cases.

The involvement of nurse managers in the clinical learning process of nursing students has the consequence that they must be able to provide supervision to students in performing nursing procedures. They must also teach the practice of nursing services they provide to patients and families. In addition they must be an example of the role of both as a nurse and also as a professional manager. Finally, the nurse manager has the task of determining which patients are the responsibility of the student in the room who performs nursing practice under the guidance of the nurse manager.

4 DISCUSSION

The results show that there are 5 managerial competencies run by nurse managers at USU Hospital. They were (1) function of ward management (planning, staffing, organizing, directing, and controlling), (2) management of patient care (identification of patient acuity, collaborating, coordinating, checking patient's status and checking completeness of discharge documents), (3) leadership (decision maker, conflict mediator, lobbying, bargaining), (4) self and staff development (updating knowledge and skills and interpersonal relation), and (5) function of preceptorship (supervising, teaching, role modeling, selecting case). This competency has been carried out by all nurse nurses at USU Hospital since the hospital operated in 2016.

Having basic management function is compulsory for nurse managers in order to run daily ward operational. They should be competent on planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling in running a ward. These 5 basic management function will help them to achieve the ultimate purposes of their position as a head nurse.

Nurse managers who have competencies on basic management function have been proved to be succeed in play their roles. A study by Rashed, Al Torky, and Morsey (2015) found that there is correlation between head nurses' management functions and nursing productivity at medical units, surgical unit, post operative ICU, casualty intensive care unit.

As a leader in the ward, of course, the nurse manager is able to show his leadership spirit to his subordinates. With effective leadership, the implementation of nursing practice and nursing services can run well. In addition, solid leadership will produce better patient outcomes by increasing nursing skills through increasing staff skills and competencies (Frankle, 2008).

As a preceptor, the nurse manager prepares nursing students using a variety of clinical skills where nursing is practiced. To do this appropriately, they must have competencies in clinical teaching. These competencies paired with their knowledge and skills on clinical areas will guide students to achieve their clinical placement goals. Participants in this study performed teaching roles, selecting cases, supervising, and role modeling for students. By doing this kind of competencies, nurse managers will help students to be professional nurses in the future.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Nurse managers in a hospital have to master a set of managerial competency in order to manage effective daily ward operational. It is recommended that a hospital to set standardized managerial competency for nurse managers as requirements for a nurse to be a nurse manager.

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