

Bridging The Gap: Assessing Challenges and Impacts of Junior Staff Nurses' Transition to The Charge Nurses' Roles for Leadership Training Enhancement

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ABSTRACT

*This study assessed the challenges encountered by **junior staff nurses transitioning to charge nurse roles** and examined how these challenges affect **leadership performance**. Using a descriptive-correlational quantitative design, data were collected from 150 junior staff nurses via a structured survey. Findings revealed moderate transition difficulties, particularly in balancing clinical and administrative responsibilities, decision-making, communication, and leadership confidence. Leadership effectiveness was significantly associated with educational attainment, area assignment, work experience, managerial experience, and leadership training. The study recommends **structured leadership development programs, mentorship systems, and institutional support mechanisms** to strengthen leadership readiness and performance.*

Keywords: Junior staff nurses, charge nurse transition, leadership performance, mentorship, leadership training, institutional support

INTRODUCTION

The transition from junior staff nurse to charge nurse is a major professional milestone that requires leadership, decision-making, communication, and team management skills. As healthcare systems become increasingly complex, nurses are expected to assume leadership responsibilities while maintaining quality patient care. However, many newly promoted charge nurses experience role ambiguity, insufficient leadership preparation, increased workload, and limited support, which may affect leadership effectiveness and patient outcomes

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of junior staff nurses as they transition into charge nurse positions, focusing on potential challenges and the factors that affect their effectiveness as charge nurses. It also aims to identify the impact of these issues on role performance and to create suitable leadership and managerial development programs to support a smoother, more effective transition.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1 Age; 1.2 Sex; 1.3 Marital Status; 1.4 Highest Educational Attainment; 1.5 Area of Assignment; 1.6 Months of Clinical Experience; 1.7 Previous Managerial

Experience; 1.8 Related Leadership Training Attended

2. What is the level of challenges experienced by junior staff nurses during their transition to charge nurse roles within the first three to six months, in terms of:

2.1 Role adjustment; 2.2 Decision-making confidence; 2.3 Workload management; 2.4 Communication with staff; 2.5 Guidance and supervision received

3. What is the level of impact of the transition to leadership roles in terms of:

3.1 Work experience; 3.2 Leadership training received; 3.3 Workload and staffing levels; 3.4 Mentorship and support; 3.5 Institutional support

4. What is the level of leadership effectiveness of junior staff nurses in performing the charge nurse role during the transition period?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the level of challenges experienced and the level of leadership effectiveness of junior staff nurses when grouped according to their demographic profile?

6. What leadership and managerial training program can be proposed based on the findings to support the effective transition of junior staff nurses to charge nurse roles?

Scope and Delimitation

The study focused on junior staff nurses who had served as charge nurses for 3–6 months in selected healthcare institutions. Variables examined included demographic characteristics, transition challenges, leadership readiness, mentorship, workload, staffing, leadership training, and institutional support. Findings were limited to the selected hospitals and relied on self-reported survey responses

Review of Related Literature

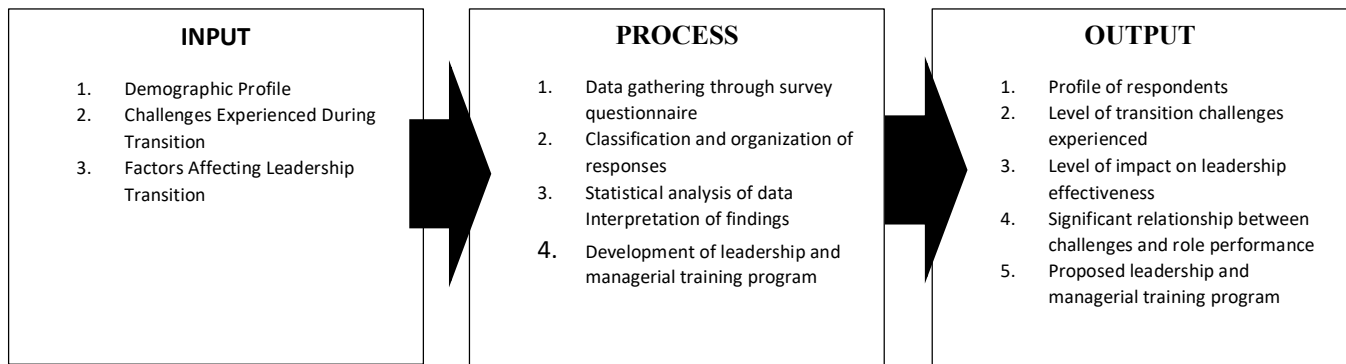
According to Hallaran et al. (2022) and Doherty et al. (2022), the transition from junior staff nurse to charge nurse is a challenging phase characterized by role adjustment difficulties, leadership uncertainty, and increased responsibilities. Charette et al. (2022) and Melissant et al. (2024) emphasized that mentorship, structured transition programs, and organizational support significantly improve nurses' confidence and leadership competence. Furthermore, Kleine et al. (2024) and Gunawan et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of transformational leadership, communication, and decision-making skills in enhancing leadership effectiveness and patient care outcomes. Despite these findings, Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2024) noted that limited studies specifically focus on junior staff nurses transitioning into charge nurse roles, indicating the need for further research and targeted leadership development programs

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Faye Glenn Abdellah's 21 Nursing Problems Theory, Sister Callista Roy's Adaptation Model, and Patricia Benner's Novice-to-Expert Theory. Abdellah's theory helps identify the challenges and needs encountered by junior staff

nurses during their transition to charge nurse roles. Roy's Adaptation Model explains how nurses adjust to new responsibilities and workplace demands, while Benner's theory describes the development of competence and confidence through experience. Together, these theories provide a framework for understanding how junior staff nurses adapt to leadership roles and develop the skills necessary for effective charge nurse performance.

Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design to assess the challenges experienced by junior staff nurses during their transition to charge nurse roles and determine the relationship between these challenges and leadership effectiveness. This design enabled the researcher to objectively describe existing conditions and examine significant relationships among variables without manipulating them.

Research Steps

The study followed a systematic process that included securing ethical approval, obtaining institutional permission, validating and pilot-testing the research instrument, administering the survey questionnaire, collecting and analyzing data, and interpreting the results to develop recommendations and a proposed leadership training program.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire administered to 150 junior staff nurses who had recently transitioned to charge nurse roles. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on established inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance to the study objectives.

Data Analysis Methods

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe respondent characteristics and study variables, while t-test and ANOVA were utilized to determine significant relationships among variables.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

The study tested the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the challenges junior staff nurses experience during their transition to charge nurse roles and their leadership effectiveness. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings, the research instrument underwent content validation by a panel of experts and pilot testing among 20 junior staff nurses. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable for measuring the intended constructs

Study Limitations and ethical considerations

The study was limited to selected healthcare institutions and relied on self-reported responses, which may be subject to response bias. Ethical principles were observed through informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality of information, and approval from the appropriate ethics review committee

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study found that junior staff nurses experienced a moderate level of challenges during their transition to charge nurse roles, particularly in balancing clinical and administrative responsibilities, leadership decision-making, and communication. The impact of the transition on leadership readiness and effectiveness was also rated as moderate, with prior work experience identified as a significant factor in facilitating role adaptation. Although respondents generally demonstrated moderate leadership effectiveness, factors such as educational attainment, area assignment, months of experience, previous managerial experience, and leadership training were significantly associated with better role performance. Based on these findings, the study proposed a structured leadership and managerial training program emphasizing mentorship, communication, decision-making, conflict management, and institutional support to enhance leadership readiness among newly promoted charge nurses

SUMMARY

This study assessed the challenges and impacts of junior staff nurses' transition to charge nurse roles among 150 respondents using a descriptive-correlational design. Results showed that respondents experienced moderate transition challenges and leadership impacts, with several demographic and professional factors significantly influencing leadership effectiveness. The findings served as the basis for proposing a leadership and managerial training program.

CONCLUSIONS

The transition from junior staff nurse to charge nurse presents moderate leadership and management challenges that can affect role performance. However, nurses who possess adequate experience, training, and organizational support demonstrate better leadership effectiveness. Therefore, leadership readiness is strengthened through continuous professional development, mentorship, and institutional support systems

RECOMMENDATIONS

Healthcare institutions should implement structured leadership development programs, mentorship initiatives, and continuous training opportunities for newly promoted charge nurses. Nurse managers should provide regular guidance and support to strengthen leadership competencies, while future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies on nursing leadership transition in different healthcare settings

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