

## ■ Original article

## Teachers' managerial competency from nursing students' & faculty staff's point of view

Hedayat Jafari<sup>1</sup>, Eesa Mohammadi<sup>2,\*</sup>, Fazlollah Ahmadi<sup>3</sup>, Anoshirvan Kazemnejad<sup>4</sup>

(Received: 14 Jun 2014; Accepted: 24 Aug 2014)

### Abstract

**Background and Purpose:** One of the dimensions of nursing faculty staff competency is management. Thus discovering and explaining it for planning, administrating educational, research & administrative affairs is very important. This study aims to discover the meaning of nursing faculty staff managerial competency in the students' & teachers' mind.

**Method:** This study is a qualitative one with content analysis approach. The data have been gathered through deep unstructured interviews in the form of 30 individual and one focus group. The sampling has been done as purposive in 2012-2013 at Mazandaran Medical Sciences University. The data have been analyzed by conventional qualitative content analysis method.

**Results:** The data resulted in extracting 3 themes: promoting interaction & communication capability, boosting management capability, paying attention to & observing nursing standards and 7 categories: facilitating the relationship among the coworkers, officials and students, creating relationship with influential people in order to promote the major, shouldering the administrative responsibility, managing the educational & class group, enriching the specialized sessions, having discipline & adhering to the professional principles. These themes indicate the semantic features perceived by nursing faculty staff and students about nursing teachers' managerial competency.

**Conclusion:** Besides presenting 3 basic features of nursing faculty staff managerial competency, the present study could determine the criteria of these features regarding the field conditions. These findings can be applied for designing the rating scale for nursing faculty members' professional competency.

**Keywords:** Managerial competency, Nursing faculty staff, Nursing students, Qualitative research, Content analysis

### Introduction

Competency is a complicated concept applied in diverse areas of nursing including nursing education & management. Various studies have been performed in this regard, yet there are many ambiguities in perceiving this concept (1, 2). Of the important & operational definitions related to the concept of competency has been proposed by Alexander M. & Runciman P. They stated that competency in nursing reflects a combination of

knowledge, perception and judgment, a range of cognitive skills elements, technical or motor-psychological, interpersonal and a range of personal attitudes (3). Roffe IM. (1999) said: some competency models focus on the individuals' qualitative characteristics and some other on the skills and the other ones on job behaviors and personal competencies (4). Generally speaking, the dimensions of competency refer to various areas of

<sup>1</sup>Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.

<sup>2</sup>Corresponding author: Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran. Email: mohamade@modares.ac.ir.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.

<sup>4</sup>Department of BioStatistics, Medical Sciences College, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.

seems obvious is that the definitions on competency are diverse probably be due to knowledge, skill, attitude, communications, management, motivation and etc. (5-8). What disagreement in competency competency related meaning & concept. The reason behind these disparities can be the result of different attitudes, models, experiences and fields in viewing this phenomenon (3-11).

Regarding the significance of the issue as nursing board members managerial competency, its sensitivity and complexities in education and the necessity behind rating it, the researchers took steps to investigate nursing faculty staff's managerial competency in their corporate, cultural and social background using the perceptions, feelings and also experiences of the nursing faculty members and students. Given the limited studies in this field, the researchers decided to discover and explain the meaning of nursing faculty members' managerial competency in nursing teachers' and students' perspective using qualitative method.

## Materials and Methods

With respect to the goal the study pursues, that is, to detect nursing faculty members' and students' perceived managerial competency related meaning, the qualitative content analysis has been employed able to discover & clarify the perception of human feelings & meanings concealed in their daily experiences (12). Since the researchers are trying to delve into nursing board members' managerial competency & the internal dimensions of this concept, they've selected qualitative research design with conventional content analysis (13). The participants include 30 individuals as the main stakeholders namely nursing faculty staff & students who at least had one time rating experience at Mazandaran Medical science University (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Participants' characteristics

Participants Characteristics	Students	Focus group	Instructors
Educational level and scientific rank (N)*	Bachelor (10) MSc (4) PhD (2)	BSc. Student (6)	Assistant Professor (4)
Age (years)	20-50		Instructor
Gender (N)	Male (8)	21-26	42-55
	Female (8)	Male (3) Female (3)	Male (4) Female (4)
Experience (years)	-	-	13-30

\*Number

The location for the interview has been determined based on the participants' input that is usually in the teachers or students working or education place. The sampling has been done by purposive method until data saturation in 2013-2014. 24 deep unstructured interviews & 6 supplementary interviews have been done in order to clarify some events and codes. One 6-person focus group interview has been done by the students' participation. Some general questions posed for starting the interviews are as the following:

- What responsibilities do you have as a faculty staff?
- How do you try to create managerial competencies in yourself?
- Would you please clarify your input by some concrete examples?
- As a student, what features do you look for in your teachers?

Then based on their answers, some exploratory & deepening questions like "present some concrete examples of your teacher's managerial competency" are set forth.

The ethical permit to do the research has been obtained through submitting the proposal (Letter No.o.30/19098 dated 11 Nov. 2012) being ratified by Tarbiat Modares University Medical Research Ethical Committee. Before the interview, the participants' oral & written consent was acquired. They were assured that their statements will be

kept confidential. Each interview lasted 40-60 m and in the supplementary ones, 5-15 m (12). Through the participant's agreement, all the interviews have been digitally recorded and immediately after the interview, it has been transferred to computer memory. The conversation has been hand written word by word extremely accurately. Each interview has been assigned a code, and after being written down, the researcher removed the probable errors by relistening to the interview & comparing it with the written text.

The focus group consisted of 6 girl & boy nursing students (3-3) focusing on starting this question: "What experience do you have about your teacher's managerial competency in class or clinic?"

Considering the inter-participants conversation and by the researcher guiding a little, the participants expressed their experiences and perceptions in this respect. The interviews took 2 h. Simultaneously along with data collection, the data analysis has been done using inductive & comparative & continuous methods. This way that after doing each interview, the taped interviews have been written down and transcript. The interview text has been reviewed several times. Then the semantic units have been underlined and after that the appropriate codes for each semantic unit has been written and the codes have been categorized based on the conceptual & semantic similarity & compacted as much as possible. The reduction trend in decreasing data ran in all main & sub-analysis and category units. Finally, the main categories data have been classified as more conceptual and at the end, the themes have been abstracted. The analysis process has been repeated as each interview was added and the categories have been modified (14).

In order for the findings validity to be adequate, the handwritten texts, interviews and analytical units have been extracted with the initial codes, presented to the participants and their supplementary comments have been acquired and the necessary modification and the recommended

opinions have been applied. In addition, two expert teachers in the qualitative research field have supervised and audited all study process stages. Sampling expressed through maximum variance increased the data verification, association and transferability (13).

**Ethical Considerations:** This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Tarbiat Modares University. The participants signed the written informed consent for voluntary participation in the study before completing the questionnaires.

## Results

The interviews data analysis led to the emergence of 242 initial codes & the extraction of 3 themes: Strengthening capability in interaction & communication, boosting managerial capability, paying attention to and observing nursing standards And 7 categories as: Facilitating the relationship among the coworkers, officials and students, creating the relationship with influential people in order to promote the major, shouldering the administrative responsibility, managing the educational & class group, enriching the specialized sessions, having discipline, adhering to the professional principles.

These themes express the semantic traits that have been perceived by nursing faculty staff and students about nursing teachers' managerial competency.

In the following, these themes are explained according to the experienced data: \*Strengthening capability in interaction & communication: This theme indicates the importance behind exploiting capability in interaction & communication in the way the teachers and students form their perception about nursing managerial competency. This theme implies that the teachers focus especially on certain criteria to promote their management levels. This theme has been extracted from two categories "trying to facilitate & improve the relational atmosphere among colleagues and the executive officials and also interaction in order to promote the

major". The majority of the participants whether the teachers or the students pay practical attention to boost communication in all aspects.

One of the nursing teachers stated in this regard: "in nursing major, the communication with the coworker, student and patient is very important, something that I myself focus on when working, this is what I take into account teacher (T, 13)".

In accord with their coworker and in this regard, another teacher said: "I could diminish the gap between education & treatment by decent communication, this helps in my students' education effectively (T, 19 years background)".

Nursing major teachers consider having managerial skills a positive trait: "In my mind, having communication skills is helpful in solving problems" Most of the students agreed with their teacher's idea & emphasized the role of the teacher's capability in appropriate communication.

The students asserted: "the teacher's good relationship indicates their high managerial potential and for sure, it promotes the students' education level (p.10 nursing student)".

About the management aspect, nursing teachers make efforts to have influencing communication with social & political officials in order to promote the major: "I communicate with state and social authorities in order to promote myself and the major I work in (T, 13)".

**\*\*Boosting Managerial Capability:** This theme implies that teachers pay attention to special criteria to upgrade competency level in management whether running the class, the educational group or the faculty. Of such features they try to create and strengthen this trait is accepting administrative responsibility and doing the assigned tasks.

One of the experienced nursing teachers stated in this respect that: "I make efforts to earn some management skills in running the class, faculty and even a patient in grave condition (T, 13).

The participants view doing administrative task a managerial one. Thus one of the nursing staff's

tasks is to attend various office and educational meetings.

One of the nursing teachers suggested: "I attend the educational & research council as the head of a department of one of the nursing branches and take it as one of my specialized and managerial tasks as the head of department (T, 25)".

Another nursing teacher was in agreement with him/her and said: "As the head of the department, I do planning for the group and supervise the group & students (T, 46)".

Another characteristic the nursing teachers strive to create and boost in themselves is raising managerial potential in running the faculty, group and class. One of the senior nursing students stated: "Some master teachers' working style results in raising our self-confidence and practicing management (T.8)".

Another nursing student said in this respect: "Some teachers supervising the student-patient relationship indicates another aspect of management and their sense of obligation (T, 14).

Another student saw eye to eye with her friend and stated: "A teacher in the position of manager shoulders some responsibilities one of which is to deal with the students problems in the hospital and faculty (T, 9).

Of the features requiring attention in teacher's management dimension is their capability in managing the class in the right way. A student said in this regard: "This teacher avoids killing time in class & manages the class well (T, 12).

Of the properties nursing teachers strive to create & promote in themselves is to enrich their educational group specialized sessions by managing suitably. One of the experienced teachers asserted: "I try to run different groups' sessions well and to be useful for the students and my fellows (T, 13).

The teachers consider good group sessions as the way to transfer knowledge and experience: "The teachers' management-like participation in the sessions transfers knowledge and raises

competency (T, 24)".

A student expresses her experience in class: "One of the teachers with administrative & management background pays more attention to our desires and we try more, too (15)".

\*\*\*Paying attention to and observing nursing standards: This theme implies that the teachers' pay special attention to some other important standards in order to promote education and class efficiency; to name a few, we can mention that they strive to create & strengthen it in themselves, to identify and follow diverse nursing codes and standards whether in the faculty or theoretical classes or in the clinic and the other educational settings. The study participating nursing teachers and students focus on the features like recognizing professional principles and standards and professional discipline; so that one of the experienced nursing teachers said: "I try to know professional standards in my field of study and observe order and discipline. I pay attention to the dominant nursing discipline (T, 13)". Commitment to the professional principles is of the traits nursing teachers focus on: "I make efforts to adhere to professional nursing codes (T, 24)" "I as a teacher try to be law abiding (T, 26)".

The teachers consider being informed about the latest office & educational circulars as their professional principles and believe that a faculty staff, whether in the college or in the clinic and health and treatment settings, has to be totally aware of educational rules & standards whether in teaching or in dealing with coworkers and the dominant conditions in nursing.

A teacher stated in this regard: "I am completely informed about the latest work circulars or I get information about them (T, 30)".

The collection of the mentioned experiences and feelings the teachers and students expressed denote the practical attention of the teacher on boosting capability in interaction & communication encompassing trying to facilitate & improve the relationship between the colleagues, the

administrative officials and the students, to have communication with influential people in order to promote the major and also to reinforce management capability such as shouldering administrative responsibility and the assigned tasks, trying to enrich specialized sessions plus focusing on discipline in nursing & adhering to professional principles that nursing teachers and students take into account as nursing teachers' managerial competency, that is, one of the significant aspects of professional competency of nursing faculty members.

## Discussion

The present research findings suggest that nursing teachers' and students' experiences about managerial competency involves strengthening capability in interaction & communication, boosting managerial capability, paying attention to and observing nursing standards. The noted experienced perceptions and feelings reflect two kinds of distinct insights and two experiences and feelings of nursing teachers and students each of whom has earned their own experiences. In the majority of the cases, these experiences and feelings have been close to each other; for instance, in the theme namely boosting managerial capability, one of the nursing teachers mentioned participating nursing faculty staff in group sessions and the specialized committees as the way to transfer knowledge and experience and one of the nursing students called the teachers who participate in the specialized educational sessions as more efficient & more competent because of paying more attention to the students' desires and striving to promote education and class and nursing major.

The findings of the research show that the communication and interaction skills with coworkers, the students and authorities indicate a particular managerial competency that both teachers and students make special efforts for that is included in the theme as Strengthening

capability in interaction & communication. In this line, a study has been carried out by Hekmatpour et al. (2013) about the characteristics of a capable teacher from nursing students', experts' and faculty members' perspective (15). In this research, in the theme of the individual features, the communication skills have been noted. In this research, the right communication with the student in class and clinic, patients and hospital personnel has been mentioned as the features of a capable teacher consistent with the findings of this research (12). In the study by Siamian et al. (2012), the ability to communicate is one of the priorities for the teachers, something focused by the majority of the students (16). Bergman's research demonstrated that the students consider the teachers' communication skills very significant (17).

In the recent research, capability in performance has been stated as a very decisive criterion in nursing teachers' competency depicted in the theme paying attention to and observing nursing standards. This consistency has been dealt with in other studies, too. The other studies view competency the behavior based on the ability of performance (18-21) in real situations (6-22), and based on the standards (22) and a changing and dynamic process (6-23). For this, the characteristics of an efficient, competent & capable teacher is under the focus of many researchers around the world (24).

The current study findings depicted in the theme boosting managerial capability that teacher as the director of a department can play a fundamental role in designing and planning the educational calendar & create remarkable changes in the education level and bring about educational promotion. The study by Kalb (2006) showed that one of the teacher's managerial competencies is the potential to design & plan education that is compatible with this study based findings (25).

In the theme as strengthening capability in interaction & communication, the findings of this research showed that nursing teachers and students make their communication efforts to

upgrade nursing major. They view a competent teacher someone who has decent social & political relationship and thinks about promoting nursing major. The study by Crown (2007) and Kalb (2006) also displayed that professional & political development of the major is possible via correct management and suitable relationship & the support by the state officials (25, 26).

To sum up, the present study is unique in terms of analyzing the perceptions and experiences of this subject's main related stakeholders, that is, the students and teachers. So that the research by Bagheri (1999) as a qualitative one has been associated with the concept of competency in the clinical nursing (27) and is close to the one by Siamian (2012) as a quantitative research in Mazandaran where the capable teacher has been studied only from the students' point of view or in the study by Hekmatpour (2013) in terms of methodology, and the master & PhD students' perceptions & experiences haven't been exploited. In addition, benefitting from the focus group participants' experiences in this study has increased the quality of doing the research (15). And finally, in the study by Ashghali-Farahani et al. (2013), the perceptions and feelings of nursing students who have a deep perception of nursing faculty staff's professional competency haven't been employed (28).

## Conclusion

The present study derived results resulted in discovering the real & field meaning of nursing faculty staff's managerial competency. A definition beyond & different from the one in other studies has been presented based on their mentality and ideas.

Strengthening capability in interaction & communication, boosting managerial capability, paying attention to and observing nursing standard are of nursing board members' managerial competency that paying attention to them will bring about managerial qualitative & quantitative promotion.

Regarding this issue that the current research is a field and main nursing field stakeholders' based experiences and perceptions study, it can present an appropriate and real definition of nursing faculty staff's professional competency and be applied in designing the rating scale for nursing faculty staff's professional competency matching with nursing faculty members' and students' real perception in nursing colleges and the other medical sciences fields of study.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

### Author's contributions

H. Jafari study conception and design, data collection and analysis, drafting of manuscript; E. Mohammadi study conception and design, critical revisions for important intellectual content, drafting of manuscript, supervision; F. Ahmadi study conception and design, critical revisions for important intellectual content, drafting of manuscript, supervision; A. Kazemnejad study design.

### Acknowledgments

This manuscript is part of the first author's PhD thesis, sponsored by Tarbiat Modarres University. The authors would like to thank all participants who sincerely participated in this study.

### References

- O'Neal M, Kurtz S. Certification: perspectives on competency assurance. *Semin Perioper Nurs*. 2000; 10(2): 88-92.
- Meretoja R, Leino-Kilpi H. Comparison of competence assessments made by nurse managers and practicing nurses. *J Nurs Manag*. 2003; 11(6): 404-409.
- Alexander M, Runciman P. ICN Framework of Competencies for the Generalist Nurse. *Int Council Nurses, Geneva*. 2003; 1-21.
- Roffe IM. Innovation and creativity in organization: A review of the implications for training and development. *J Euro Ind Train*. 1999; 23(4): 224-37.
- Whelan L. Competency assessment of nursing staff. *Orthop Nurs*. 2006; 25(3): 198-202.
- Calman L. Patients' views of nurses' competence. *Nurs Educ Today*. 2006; 26(8): 719-725.
- Kalb KB, Cherry NM, Kauzloric J, Brender A, Green K, Miyagawa L, et al. A competency-based approach to public health nursing performance appraisal. *Public Health Nurs*. 2006; 23(2): 115-138.
- Ragneskog H, Gerdner L. Competence in nursing informatics among nursing students and staff at a nursing institute in Sweden. *Health Info Libr J*. 2006; 23(2): 126-132.
- Jafari H, Mohammadi E, Ahmadi F, Kazemnejad. The perceptions of nursing students and their teachers about professional competency of academic staff: A qualitative study. *J Mazand Univ Med Sci*. 2014; 23(110): 2-15.
- Jafari H, Mohammadi E, Ahmadi F, Kazemnejad A, Shorofi SA. The experience of nursing instructors and students on professional competency of nursing academic staff: A qualitative study. *Glob J Health Sci*. 2014; 6 (4): 33710.
- Jafari H, Mohammadi E, Ahmadi F, Kazemnejad. Designing and psychometric Measure for Determining the Professional Competence of Nursing Faculty Members. *J Nurs Midw Sci (JMUMS)*. 2014; 1(2): 8-13.
- Elo S, Kyngas H. The qualitative content analysis process. *J Adv Nurs*. 2008; 62(1): 107-15.
- Sandelowski M. Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Res Nurs Health*. 2000; 23(4): 334-40.
- Krippendorff K. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. 2nd ed. Michigan: Sage; 2004.
- Hekmatpour D, Jahani F, Nejat N. Exploration of characteristics of a competent nursing faculty member: A qualitative study. *Iran J Nurs Res*. 2013; 8(1): 58-67.
- Siamian H, Balaghafari A, Aligolbandi K., Reza Nezhad SF, Sharifi Nick M, Shahrabi A, et al. Characteristics of a Good University Lecturer According to Students. *J Mazand Uni Med Sci*. 2013; 22(96):106-113.

17. Bergman K, Gaitskill T. Faculty and student perceptions of effective Clinical teachers: an extension study. *J. Prof. Nurs.* 1990; 6(1): 33-44.
18. Lofmark A, Smide B, Wikblad K. Competence of newly-graduated nurses-a comparison of the perceptions of qualified nurses and students. *J AdvNurs.* 2006; 53(6): 721-728.
19. Ramritu PL, Barnard A. New nurse graduates' understanding of competence. *IntNurs Rev* 2001; 48(1): 47-57.
20. Issel LM, Baldwin KA, Lyns RL, Madamala K. Self-reported competency of public health nurses and faculty in Illinois. *Public Health Nurs.* 2006; 23(2): 168-177.
21. Landmark BT, Hansen GS, Bjones I, BØhler A. Clinical supervision—factors defined by nurses as influential upon the development of competence and skills in supervision. *J ClinNurs.* 2003; 12(6): 834-841.
22. Pearson A, FitzGerald M, Walsh K. Nurses' views on competency indicators for Australian nursing. *Collegian.* 2002; 9(1): 36- 40.
23. Arcand LL, Neumann JA. Nursing competency assessment across the continuum of care. *J ContinEducNurs.* 2005; 36(6): 247- 254.
24. Asgari F, MahjoobMoadab H. Comparing characteristics of an effective teaching from teachers' and students point of view, Guilan university of medical sciences. *J Med Edu Develop Cent Kerman Univ Med Sci.* 2010; 7(1): 26-33.
25. Kalb KB, Cherry NM, Kauzloric J, Brender A, Green K, Miyagawa L, et al. A competency-based approach to public health nursing performance appraisal. *Public Health Nurs.* 2006; 23(2): 115-138.
26. Cowan DT, Wilson-Barnett J, Norman IJ. A European survey of general nurses' self assessment of competency. *Nurse Edu Today.* 2007; 27(5): 452-458.
27. Bagheri Nesami M, Rafiei F, Parvizi S, Esmaili R. Concept analysis of competency in nursing: Qualitative research. *J MazandUni Med Sci.* 2008; 18(67): 35-44.
28. Farahani M A, Rafii F, EmamzadehGhasemi HS. Contributing factors in attainment of teaching competency for nursing instructors: A qualitative study. *Iran J Med Edu.* 2013; 13(9): 766.