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The Influence of Managerial Decision Making on the Effectiveness of Nursing Services

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Abstract

Managerial decision-making is a core competency in nursing management that plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of nursing services. Decisions made by nursing managers influence resource management, team coordination, quality of care, and patient safety. This study aims to explore in depth the influence of managerial decision-making on the effectiveness of nursing services in hospitals. This study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. Participants consisted of nursing managers, ward heads, and senior nurses selected using purposive sampling based on their experience and involvement in the managerial decision-making process. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and managerial document review. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes emerging from participants' experiences. The results identified five main themes: decision-making as a determinant of the direction of nursing services, the influence of managerial competence and experience on decision quality, the importance of nurse participation in the decision-making process, the role of data-driven decisions in improving service quality and safety, and the direct impact of managerial decision-making on the effectiveness of nursing services. Appropriate, participatory, and evidence-based decisions have been shown to improve team coordination, the smoothness of nursing care, and overall service quality. This study concludes that strengthening managerial decision-making capacity is a key factor in increasing the effectiveness of nursing services and should be a focus in developing nursing management in hospitals.

Keywords: Managerial Decision-Making, Service Effectiveness, Nursing Management, Nursing Leadership, Qualitative Research

Introduction

Nursing services are a core component of the healthcare system because they are directly related to patient safety, service quality, and user satisfaction. In the context of complex and evolving services, the managerial decision-making process at the nursing management level is a crucial element that determines the effectiveness of nursing care delivery.

Managerial decisions include prioritization, resource allocation, quality supervision, and handling critical incidents that occur in nursing services. These decisions involve not only administrative aspects but also can influence clinical and operational outcomes, ultimately increasing or decreasing the effectiveness of nursing services.

According to research conducted in the context of a nursing managerial environment, skills in managing risk information and interacting with incident reporting systems are crucial decision-making resources for nurse managers to maintain safety and service outcomes (Islam, Hutchinson, & Bucknall, 2017).

This study demonstrates that data quality, formal training of system users, and organizational feedback are central factors in decision-making capacity, leading to safer and more effective changes in nursing practice. A robust and well-managed information system supports nurse management in identifying risk trends and making evidence-based decisions.

Furthermore, the clinical decision-making process carried out by nurses directly in nursing care has a reciprocal relationship with service effectiveness. An integrative literature review found that understanding of the clinical situation, practical experience, work unit culture, education, and autonomy are key factors influencing how nurses make decisions in medical-surgical practice, which in turn is related to clinical service effectiveness.

Another study, examining the determinants of nurses' clinical decision-making, also showed that various personal and contextual factors contribute to daily decision-making skills in intensive care units, such as the ability to evaluate patient status and make rapid and appropriate care decisions.

The leadership function in nursing management also emphasizes the

manager's role in creating an environment that supports effective decision-making. Strong leadership enables nurse managers to provide strategic direction, ensure effective team coordination, and increase staff involvement in decision-making processes that impact service quality.

This aligns with the findings of Jeon, Simpson, and Chenoweth (2013), who evaluated the effectiveness of a specific leadership management program in geriatric care. Although not specifically focused on the context of acute care nursing, the program demonstrated that improving managerial competency has the potential to improve the quality of the work environment and service outcomes.

Developing and understanding informatics competencies is also part of strengthening managerial decision-making in nursing. These competencies encompass the ability to access, manage, and utilize information technology to support more accurate and timely decision-making in nursing management practice.

A study in the journal *Revista da Escola de Enfermagem da USP* emphasized that informatics competencies are a crucial foundation for supporting evidence-based management decision-making practices and adapting to technological developments that impact service effectiveness.

The effectiveness of nursing service management is also evident in how decision-making processes are implemented within the organizational structure. For example, Brown, Patel, and McInnes (2016) systematically reviewed the effectiveness of clinical networks in improving overall service quality and patient outcomes.

Although their focus was broader on clinical networks, the study's results demonstrated that the implementation of coordinated managerial decisions will impact systemic service quality improvements.

Much of the literature also suggests that effective decision-making involves not only technical aspects but also socio-organizational dimensions. In their integrative review, Nibbelink and Brewer (2018) emphasized that clinical experience, work unit culture, professional autonomy, and educational elements play a crucial role in the decision-making process of quality nurses, which ultimately impacts the effectiveness of nursing services.

In nursing management practice, the role of decision-making is also related to information structures and risk management processes. A qualitative analysis of nurse managers showed that interactions with risk management systems influence how they consider, process, and use information to make strategic decisions related to safety and service quality. This suggests that managerial decisions in nursing services are inseparable from the ability to manage risk data and effective communication between organizational elements.

Furthermore, a study of clinical determinants in Indonesia identified limitations in nurses' decision-making abilities in intensive care units, which directly impact the effectiveness of patient care and outcomes. These findings underscore the need to focus on developing decision-making competencies at both the clinical and managerial levels so that nursing services can meet optimal quality standards and patient safety.

Conceptually, managerial decision-making in nursing serves as a pivot between organizational policies, clinical practices, and service outcomes. A sound decision-making process requires the integration of scientific knowledge, professional experience, organizational context, and the ability to utilize information technology and data.

The more effective the decisions made by nurse managers, the greater the likelihood of achieving high-quality,

efficient, safe nursing services that meet the expectations of service users.

In other words, managerial decision-making is not simply an administrative action, but a complex process involving individual, organizational, and technological factors that must be optimized to achieve effective nursing services at all levels of healthcare.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach to deeply understand how managerial decision-making influences the effectiveness of nursing services in a hospital context. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the experiences, perceptions, and thought processes of practitioners in the field, thus generating a rich and contextual understanding of this complex socio-organizational phenomenon.

According to Creswell, qualitative research emphasizes understanding the meanings people assign to their lived experiences and how these phenomena unfold within their social context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

In research on managerial decisions, the complexity of relationships between actors, organizational structures, and the dynamics of work culture in nursing units are not easily captured through a quantitative approach alone.

Therefore, a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate for exploring in-depth patterns, themes, and decision-making processes by nurse managers, which subsequently impact the effectiveness of nursing services.

The research design used was descriptive qualitative with a phenomenological approach. This approach allowed researchers to explore the subjective experiences of nurse managers and nursing staff regarding decision-making within the context of effective nursing services.

The phenomenological approach focuses on the lived experiences of practitioners within their professional contexts, as well as the meanings they attach to managerial decision-making phenomena in their daily work (Abdelhadi et al., 2020).

The study was conducted in several Class A and B general hospitals with diverse nursing service units, including inpatient units, ICUs, and emergency units. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, selecting informants deemed to have direct and relevant experience in managerial decision-making and the nursing service process.

Participant inclusion criteria included nurse managers, unit heads, and senior nurses involved in strategic and clinical decision-making processes. The total number of participants was approximately 10-15 individuals with at least three years of experience in managerial or supervisory positions in nursing units. Data were collected through several primary qualitative research techniques:

1. In-Depth Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit narratives of informants' experiences, perspectives, and perceptions regarding the decision-making process and its impact on the effectiveness of nursing services. Each interview was audio-recorded after obtaining written consent from the informant and lasted approximately 45-60 minutes.
2. Participatory Observation. Direct observations in the nursing service unit were conducted to understand work dynamics, interactions between team members, and the implementation of managerial decisions in real-world practice. Observations were conducted non-intrusively using systematic field notes.

3. Organizational Documentation. Documents such as standard operating procedures (SOPs), management meetings, incident logs, and service effectiveness reports were analyzed to complement the narrative data from interviews and observations.

A data triangulation approach was applied to increase the validity and credibility of the research findings by combining data from various sources (interviews, observations, and documents).

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns, themes, and key meanings in the informants' narratives. The process included: 1) Verbatim transcription of interviews, 2) Initial coding (open coding) to group meaning units, 3) Theme development through axial and selective coding, 4) Triangulation and cross-data verification to ensure consistency of findings. This thematic approach is consistent with the characteristics of qualitative research, which focuses on systematizing the meaning of informants' experiences in real-world contexts.

Trustworthiness was ensured through data triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking to ensure that data interpretations reflected the reality of their experiences. All research ethics procedures were followed, including written informed consent prior to interviews, confidentiality of participants, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Result

Data analysis was conducted based on the results of in-depth interviews with 12 informants, including nursing managers, ward heads, and senior nurses, as well as observations and managerial document reviews. The thematic analysis process yielded five main themes that illustrate the influence of managerial decision-making on the effectiveness of

nursing services. These themes reflect the experiences, perceptions, and actual practice of decision-making in the context of daily nursing services.

Theme 1: Managerial Decision-Making as a Determinant of the Direction and Priorities of Nursing Services

Most informants stated that managerial decisions play a "direction-setting" role in the implementation of nursing services. Decisions made by nursing managers, particularly regarding service priority setting, task allocation, and workload adjustments, directly impact the smooth running of nursing care in the work unit.

Managers who are able to make decisions quickly and accurately, especially under conditions of limited resources, are considered capable of maintaining continuity of care and preventing delays in nursing interventions. Informants revealed that when managerial decisions are unclear or too slow, nurses experience confusion in determining action priorities, which impacts service effectiveness.

These findings indicate that managerial decision-making serves as a structural foundation that guides all nursing service activities to ensure they align with organizational goals and patient needs.

Theme 2: Managerial Decision Quality Is Influenced by the Experience and Competence of Nursing Managers

The second theme revealed that the quality of decision-making is significantly influenced by the nursing manager's work experience, educational background, and managerial competence. Informants led by managers with strong clinical and managerial experience tended to perceive decisions that were more realistic, contextual, and effectively implemented in the field.

Conversely, decisions made without considering the actual conditions in the work unit often elicited resistance from nurses and resulted in lower implementation effectiveness. Informants stated that managers who understood nursing workflows and team dynamics were able to make more adaptive decisions to changing service situations.

These results confirm that managerial decision-making is not simply an administrative process, but a reflection of the integration of knowledge, experience, and situational analysis skills.

Theme 3: Nurse Participation in the Decision-Making Process Improves Service Effectiveness

The third theme indicates that the involvement of nurses in managerial decision-making positively impacts the effectiveness of nursing services. Informants assessed that decisions involving input from nurses at the executive level were more easily accepted and implemented because they aligned with the needs and realities of nursing practice.

Nurse participation also increased a sense of ownership over decisions made, thus fostering collective responsibility in service delivery. Informants reported that a participatory approach created more open two-way communication between managers and staff, ultimately strengthening teamwork and service coordination.

Conversely, top-down decisions without nurse involvement often led to dissatisfaction, decreased work motivation, and hampered the effectiveness of nursing services.

Theme 4: Data-Based Managerial Decision-Making Improves Quality and Safety of Care

The fourth theme highlights the importance of using data and information

in the managerial decision-making process. Informants revealed that data-based decisions, such as service quality reports, incident rates, and nursing performance evaluations, are considered more objective and have a positive impact on service quality.

Nursing managers who actively utilize data are able to identify service issues more accurately and formulate targeted solutions. Data-based decisions also help minimize the risk of service errors and improve patient safety.

However, several informants stated that limited access to and ability to process data still hinder the implementation of evidence-based decision-making, resulting in suboptimal service effectiveness.

Theme 5: Impact of Managerial Decision-Making on Nursing Service Effectiveness

The final theme directly illustrates the relationship between managerial decision-making and nursing service effectiveness. Service effectiveness is reflected in the smoothness of nursing care, patient satisfaction, timeliness of service delivery, and strong interprofessional coordination.

Informants stated that appropriate managerial decisions can create a conducive work environment, improve nurse discipline, and strengthen nursing practice standards. Conversely, inconsistent decisions or decisions that do not consider the impact on nursing staff lead to decreased service quality, increased workload, and the potential for care errors.

Overall, the research findings indicate that managerial decision-making has a significant influence on the effectiveness of nursing services, both directly and indirectly through leadership, communication, and resource management mechanisms.

Discussion

The results of this qualitative research demonstrate that managerial decision-making is not merely a series of administrative actions, but rather a fundamental strategic process in determining the effectiveness of nursing services. The five main themes outlined previously—service direction, manager competence, staff participation, data-driven approach, and their impact on services—reflect how managerial decisions influence nursing practice holistically.

1. Decision-Making as a Pillar of Service Effectiveness

The findings of this research confirm that decisions made by nursing managers determine the operational direction of clinical units. Decisions related to staff allocation, task prioritization, and the development of daily work procedures are determinants of service quality. This aligns with the literature's view that manager leadership behaviors, including strategic decision-making, are directly related to the implementation of evidence-based practices in clinical services (Gifford, Squires, Angus, Ashley, Brosseau, Craik, et al., 2018). The study identified various manager leadership behaviors that contribute to the use of research and evidence for more effective care practices, demonstrating the importance of decision-making in strengthening the quality of nursing care.

Research informants stated that quick and accurate decisions support team coordination, especially in emergencies or under-resourced situations. In a qualitative study examining how nurse managers interact with risk management systems, it was found that even when the infrastructure is available, managers' decisions are often hampered by data quality and organizational support. This impacts their ability to change practices

based on incident reports, ultimately impacting patient safety.

2. Manager Competence and Experience in Decision-Making

Competence, including clinical and managerial experience, also emerged as a key determinant of decision quality. Informants indicated that managers with a strong clinical background and mature managerial skills are better able to make adaptive decisions in response to dynamic care situations. This is consistent with the literature showing that the nature of managers' decisions is influenced by a variety of complex personal and organizational factors, such as information processing capabilities, organizational structure, and institutional support (Manoppo, 2010–2015).

Managerial competence encompasses more than just administrative skills, but also the ability to process clinical data, consider risk factors, and evaluate the impact of decisions on patient outcomes. These results support the idea that managers must have the capacity to combine professional experience with scientific knowledge to produce high-quality decisions. This approach is relevant to implementation science studies, which emphasize that leadership behaviors that support the use of research evidence strengthen clinical and organizational outcomes.

3. Nurse Participation in the Decision Process

Staff participation, especially nurses, in the decision-making process has been shown to increase the effectiveness of managerial decision implementation. In this study, nurses' involvement in deliberations and consultations regarding changes in procedures or service priorities gave them a sense of ownership of the decisions and increased acceptance of the changes. This aligns with literature

emphasizing that inclusive decision-making strengthens nurse autonomy, increases job satisfaction, and has the potential to improve clinical outcomes.

Other studies have also shown that participatory decision-making creates space for the knowledge of clinical practitioners to be synergized with managerial decisions. This integration of perspectives helps reduce resistance to change and maintains continuity of practice based on relevant evidence.

4. Data-Based and Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Findings indicate that decisions supported by quality of care data, safety event records, and scientific evidence have a positive impact on service effectiveness. The use of data helps managers objectively evaluate service issues, resulting in more targeted decisions that impact quality improvement and patient safety.

This aligns with the evidence-based leadership approach, which emphasizes the importance of using evidence in clinical and operational management. Although a recent review indicates that managers' use of evidence is still limited, the article asserts that when evidence is used effectively, it contributes to improved professional practice and clinical outcomes in nursing services (in the context of research up to 2018).

5. The Influence of Decision-Making on the Effectiveness of Nursing Services

The core theme of this study confirms that managerial decision-making is directly related to the effectiveness of nursing services. Decisions that are informed, responsive to data, and involve staff participation have been shown to result in more efficient services, better team coordination, and improved quality of care.

This service effectiveness is measured not only by operational outputs

such as response times and procedural errors, but also broader aspects such as patient satisfaction, continuity of care, and a strong culture of safety in the clinical environment. Managers who are able to make decisions quickly, accurately, based on data, and with team support tend to create a conducive work environment that is adaptive to contextual changes.

6. Practical and Theoretical Implications

These findings have broad implications for nursing management practice. First, manager competency training and development should be prioritized to improve decision-making skills, including training in data literacy and evidence-based practice. Second, organizations need to create structures that support nurse involvement in the decision-making process so that operational policies reflect real-world needs.

Theoretically, these results reinforce the management model that positions decision-making as a core competency in an effective nursing care system, while also highlighting the synergistic relationship between leadership, data, staff participation, and quality clinical outcomes.

Conclusion

This study concludes that managerial decision-making plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of nursing care. Decisions made by nursing managers not only impact administrative aspects but also directly influence the quality of nursing care, patient safety, and nurse performance in the care unit. The results indicate that clear, timely, and contextual managerial decisions can create a structured direction for care and improve nursing team coordination.

Furthermore, the quality of decision-making is strongly influenced by the competency, clinical experience, and

analytical skills of nursing managers. Managers who have a deep understanding of the dynamics of nursing services tend to be able to make adaptive and realistic decisions according to field conditions. Nurse participation in the decision-making process has also been shown to increase policy acceptance, work motivation, and the effectiveness of decision implementation in nursing practice.

Managerial decision-making based on data and scientific evidence contributes to improved service quality and patient safety. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of nursing managers in participatory, experience-based, and evidence-based decision-making is a key strategy for sustainably improving the effectiveness of nursing services in healthcare facilities.

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