

Managing the Design Process of an Innovative Training Program for Nurse Educators in Israel

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Abstract

The article discusses the main aspects of the design process of an innovative training program for nurse educators in Israel. The results of a qualitative-quantitative research are presenting reflecting the point of view of nurse educators in Israel about the need, and up to date content of an integrated and innovative training program tailored to the needs of professional improvement of nurse educators in Israel. The new program should include development of teaching skills, including the use of digital tools, of management and human skills, taking in account the generational gap between nurse educators and their students. There is also suggested to Nurse division of Ministry of Health to organize and manage a public system for training of nurse educators.

Keywords: nurse educator, training program, management, nursing division, setting policy.

JEL classification: I18, M1, M53

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1. Introduction

The role of nurse educator in Israel is a complexed and challenging role since it is involving very high responsibility in shaping Israeli nurse professional status and image. There is no professional qualification requirement for performing the role of nurse educator besides the requirement to be a nurse alumnus of a certified program and have at least 3 years of experience in clinical field (Civil Service Commission, occupation characteristics, 2012). Consequently, the only professional qualification for nurse educators is their nursing studies, while in practice they have to do a very different job of nurse educators. This role change has led to change in the target audience, from sick people to young and healthy students, the work environment, from hospital wards to classes in nursing schools, colleges and universities.

This role sets many challenges in nurse educator work, thus it seems that nurse educators do not possess the needed knowledge and pedagogical tools to

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cope with it in the current context of Israel society. Therefore, there is a need to set policy to design, manage and develop a training program for nurse educator role in Israel.

2. Literature review

Nurse educator in Israel is a nurse who is licensed by the Ministry of Health to practice nursing, holds a BA or MA nursing degree and has 3-year experience as a nurse in clinical field and at least two-year experience as clinical guide, knows Hebrew and English and has coordination and organization skills. (Civil Service Commission report, Ministry of Health – Retrieved August 1, 2019)

Rotenberg (1999), a nurse educator in Israel, claims that the responsibility of teachers who teach the nursing profession is towards students, and the main points are acquisition of knowledge, response to inquiry, personal and professional growth of the students and teachers, provision of proper nursing care and of its management. Koren & Lavon (2001) claim that the role of nurse educator is a complex task, including clinical guidance skills, classroom instruction skills, administrative skills and communication skills. Billings & Kowalski (2008) conclude that the role of a nurse educator is an evolving role and can be managed and developed as a career in various fields such as academia, teaching, management, instruction and counseling.

The research of Anderson (2009) that nurse educators lack the academic, pedagogic and managerial knowledge and skills required for their role. Being a nurse educator is more than just providing new knowledge or skills for students. An important additional task is also to develop and impart a common set of values, norms and a new identity among their students aspiring to become nursing professionals. Anderson recommends an integrated educational program that focuses on three areas: psychological, social and cognitive. In addition, Boyd & Smith (2011) claim that lecturers in healthcare-related professions, such as nurses, midwives and physiotherapists, have a master's degree but have very little or almost no experience and involvement in conducting research.

The nurse training program involves improving and expanding personal skills of new employees in preparation for future practice and various responsibility areas. The goal of the training process of new employees is to bring their knowledge, skills and abilities to the required level for properly doing their work tasks and contributing to the effective functioning of the organization. Also, trained employees can perform their role and additional roles in other areas of higher-ranking jobs more efficiently (Meshulam & Harpaz, 2015).

Elnaga & Imran (2013) claim that effective training improves employees' performance, increasing motivation and commitment to the organization. Also, when more time and resources are invested in making new employees feel "at home" in their new jobs, the more likely it is that they will identify with the company's values and contribute more to the organization (Meshulam, 2015). Mayer & Allen (1991) reinforce the claim that an organization that gives its

employees training on the job increases their commitment to the organization. In addition, employee training leads to career development, the increased work satisfaction of the employee, better job security, and to higher commitment towards their organization. Therefore, organizations should think about how they can strengthen the employee's familiarity with the organization's goals and values by designing appropriate training (Kwajha et al., 2013)

The Nursing division in Israel is a ministerial body located within the Ministry of Health and it was established in 1994. Its role is to formulate nursing policy in accordance with the development of the Ministry of Health's trends and also to develop the nursing profession as part of the healthcare system.

Training programs are accredited by the Nursing administration in the following fields: obstetrics, operating room, combined intensive care, premature intensive care, pediatric intensive care, emergency medicine, mental health, breast feeding counseling, nephrology, oncology, intensive care for geriatric patients, diabetes, primary care (community), prevention and promotion of health (public health), infections prevention, registration of follow-up receipts by nurse, cognitive behavioral therapy, sleep counseling, physical activity counseling, clinical guidance.

The goal of training programs is to educate and develop high-quality professional staff with advanced clinical skills in the area of specialization. These training programs are delivered by training centers that are nursing schools (Nursing administration, 2018).

As we may see, all training programs engage in nurse clinical activities, none of them are engaged in nurse educator training, who have to plan, organize and execute professional training programs for clinical fields.

Consequently, we have identified the research problem as the following: There is no specially designed training program for the nurse educator role in Israel that summarizes the principles, the required knowledge and skills for the role of nurse educator.

3. Research methodology

The goal of our research is to explore the managerial aspects of the process of implementing an innovative training program for nurse educator role in Israel, based on the specific needs and requirements of the main stakeholders.

Our research was a mixed exploratory sequential “qual-quant” method, which included two stages, the first qualitative and the second quantitative. The reason for selecting this research type was to acquire a deep and comprehensive understanding of the needs of the nurse educator role in a small group and, next, generalizing it to a larger research population among nurse educators in Israel.

We begin our *qualitative research* doing interviews of a representative sample of nurse educators, see Table 1, below, from nursing schools in central Israel and was inquiring about the nurse educator role and its requirements.

Table 1. Research population characteristics in the qualitative part (N=18)

	Characteristic	Number	%
Gender	Male	1	6%
	Female	17	94%
Education	BA	1	6%
	MA	11	61%
	PhD	6	33%

The group was formed by 18 participants, 17 women and 1 man, reflecting the gender structure of the whole population of nurse educators professionals. The structure of the group according to the level of education criteria with 33% having a PhD, 61% having master degree and only 1 participant having a bachelor degree, reflects a very high educational level that is also characteristic to the whole population of nurse educators.

The quantitative research consisted of a survey of 91 nurse educators from nursing schools in central Israel, using a specifically designed questionnaire including 5 parts. The characteristics of the respondents' sample are presented in Table 2.

Tale 2. Research population characteristics in the quantitative part (N=91)

	Characteristic	Number	%
Gender	Male	11	12%
	Female	80	87%
Education	BA	11	12.2%
	MA	70	76.7%
	PhD	10	11%

The structure of the respondents according to gender is 87% female and 13% male with 76,7% having a master's degree, 12.2 % having a bachelor degree, and 11% having a PhD. In conclusion, the nurse educators are highly educated and mostly women.

4. Findings and discussions

The findings from the qualitative research at national level are the following.

First, there is an important shortage of nurses in the clinical fields in Israel compared with international data in developed countries. For example, in Israel there are 6.2 nurses per 1000 people compared to 9.2 per 1000 people in OECD countries (Nursing administration, Work plan, 2020). Consequently, a target of the Nursing division of the Health Ministry of Israel since 2017 is to increase the number of nurses in all clinical fields in Israel. In order to achieve this goal, all nursing training centers in Israel must increase the number of students in all

learning classes, b. increase the number of learning classes each year. The next quote belonging to Participant no. 4 shows that this represents an opportunity to manage and implement a training program for all nurse educators in Israel.

Participant no. 4 (M, 47, 2018) adds, "It is interesting, maybe the nursing division wants to raise the number of students as a required target and therefore we need to increase and strengthen the teacher staff and maybe develop such a training course for teachers, it does not exist"

Second, as was also found in the literature review, managing the implementation process of an innovative training program requires using a specific professional language and performing uniform and well-structured processes. The research has also identified the tasks that nurse educators in Israel are required to do are the following: a. to know and use this professional language, b. to manage and act by the same core values and principles of work as students, nursing division, nursing staff in hospitalization and in the community, c. to build a standardized professional infrastructure which should include the relevant body of knowledge and professional skills for nurse educators in Israel.

Participant no. 8 (F, 432, 2018) "Yes, there is no uniformity in the nurse educator base since each one has a different history and values, but the basic skills for teaching and values should be the same".

When asked about the individual level, nurse educators have indicated they need to get professional knowledge and tools to implement the role according to the nursing division national goals.

Participant no. 14 (F, 36, 2018): "Sure. In the budget, acknowledging the necessity to train nurse educators for teaching, and maybe also do something because they are responsible for the training systems, and we need a standard for this. If there is acknowledgment, there will also be filtering. If you want to be selective, you need a budget". She added regarding the training program: "The clinical expertise is the same. We are in a kind of management role. Administration is a type of clinical skills. All the clinical competence I do is deficient, so if the Nursing division asks for clinical competence, it does not understand my role".

When discussing the intergenerational gap, the research found that most nurse educators are belonging to X-generation, while the learner generation is younger belonging to Y-generation and to Z-generation, and that there are intergenerational differences and changes causing misunderstanding and lack of communication. The nurse educator staffs, belonging to X generation, must know and take into account the characteristics of the young generation, belonging to Y and Z generation. The aim is to bring closer, to influence and to shape the future nurse generation in Israel. The Z-generation is very technologically advanced, understands and learns very fast the required knowledge, a generation that wants it all here and now, otherwise become bored. Nurse educators understand also that lack of understanding these characteristics by the nurse educator will lead to gaps and student disinterest and dissatisfaction to enroll and study nursing.

Participant no. 2 (F, 44, 2018) indicated the nurse educator challenge: "The present-day student becomes exhausted very quickly, he has no patience, let's move

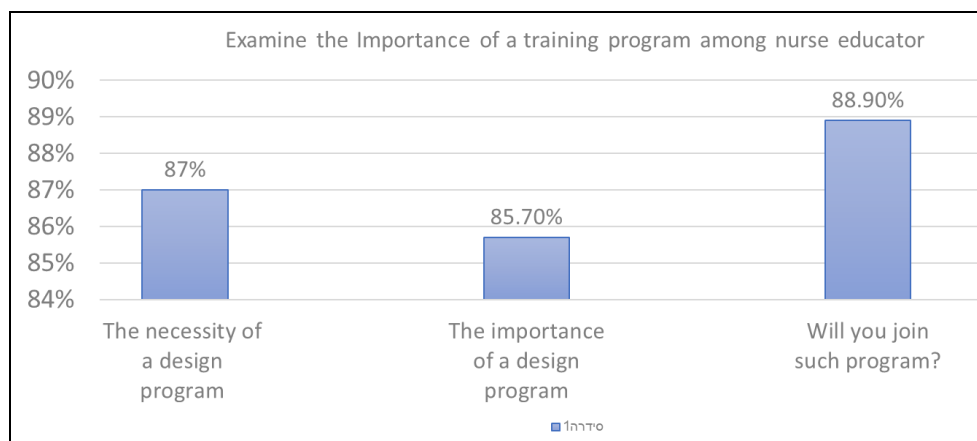
on to the next thing. The material is accessible, so she needs to be very interesting, she has to fascinate the student, and she also has to make it worth it for him to come to class. Coming to class should have added value beyond opening a book and reading the material. This is the main issue, in my opinion. Maybe it is some kind of a challenge". And she adds: "I see the teacher as someone who is supposed to empower and motivate the students. Therefore, she needs leadership skills, not managerial skills but leadership, passion, a commander's spirit"

In conclusion, the qualitative research in the nursing school in central Israel, shows that there is an intergenerational gap between the nurse educator generation and the students' generation. Comparing the number of students by generation in the Academic Nursing School shows (January 2020), in the academic course were enrolled 107 students, of which 101 were Y-generation students (94.39%) and 6 Z-generation students (5.6%) (born in 2000). The situation in the academic retraining course were enrolled 273 students, of which 40 were X-generation students (14.65%), 216 Y-generation students (79.12%), and 12 were Z-generation students (4.39%) (The students' list, Wolfson Nursing School, December 15, 2019).

The quantitative findings were the following. First, about the need for a specific designed training program was found that most of the participants (87%) agreed that a such a program is needed, that it is very important to have such a program (85.70%) and that they will join such program if it exists (88.90%) see Figure 1, below.

Second finding is based on identifying their behaviour towards the participation as students in various training programs.

Figure 1. The importance of a training program among nurse educators



We found that nurse educators attend independently specific training programs that responds to their perceived need for training in three main components of a nurse educator role: first, management skills training; second, human skills training and third, teaching skills training.

Table 3 presents the percentage of participants who have participated in training programs according to training subject.

Table 1. The percentage of participants in the professional training (N=91)

	Training subject	%
Management skills	General	%54.9
Human skills	General	%47.3
	Group guidance	%56.0
	Professional behavior (ethics)	%65.9
	Interpersonal communication skills	%76.9
Teaching skills	General	%71.4
	Assessment methods (writing tests, papers)	%91.2
	Integration of digital tools in teaching	%60.2

We may see that most of the participants are choosing first to attend training courses in the field of teaching skills (71.4%), primarily for developing knowledge about assessment methods (91.2%) and using digital instruments in teaching (60.2%), indicating their willingness to adapt to the characteristics of students belonging to generation Y and Z.

Second preference is for training courses in general management skills (54.9) indicating that nurse educators need such skills for being able to manage various projects, teams and groups in their professional activities. Such programs are usually developing fundamental management activities, such as planning, organizing, leading, motivating, controlling, project management skills, decision making, leadership skills and many others.

The third preference was for training courses in human skills (47.3%), with a focus on interpersonal communication skills (71.4%), useful for their teaching activities. Their second preferred training course is highly important since they choose trainings in professional ethics and professional behavior (65.9%), indicating that nurse educators understand the need for such moral values to be able to develop them in their future students in a proper way. Their third preferred subject was for group guidance skills, group leadership skills (56.0%) including leadership styles, team leadership, due to their importance into achieving effective group performance of their students.

Analyzing the structure of the first three preferences for training, the researcher points out to the connection between the needs, requirements and challenges for nurse educators and their subsequent proactive behaviors to train themselves for improving their capabilities and consequently their teaching activities.

Another interesting finding referred to the fact that nurse educators find important benefits in the design and delivery of an innovative specific training program aimed to satisfy their needs, the requirements of the ministry of health and the characteristics of their students. These benefits are divided into two categories:

the first, specific training program will upgrade the nurse educator role and provide better status for nurse educators and better professional recognition by the society (alpha 0.89), and the second, it will increase the initiative and freedom of action of a nurse educator (alpha 0.77).

5. Conclusions

The first conclusion of this research is that nurse educators need and want a specific innovative professional training that will merge the knowledge and skills required for their role of educators of people interested into the profession of nurse.

The second conclusion is that nurse educators understand the connection between, on one hand, the national goals set by the Nursing division and, on the other hand, their role in implementing these goals. In doing so, they understand that there are gaps and recognize that there is an opportunity to establish and integrate into one program all the aspects of the role of nurse educators, its requirements and enlarge the scope of the training accordingly.

Third conclusion is that nurse educators actively participate in various narrow focused trainings, even though their content, reliability, professionalism and scope are not supervised. Subsequently, this situation determines important variances in the quality and amount of specific knowledge and skills of nurse educators.

Another conclusion is that the Nursing division is a regulatory body that set the goal to increase the number of nurses in Israel in all clinical fields in the community and in hospitalization. In order to support the achievement of these national goals has the additional challenge to strengthen the training system for nurse educators. This unified and accredited training system should become the right hand of the Nursing division into effectively and professionally responding to a rapid changing situation in area of public health.

Finally, there is an increased perception of the essential need for developing a professional innovative and integrated training program in order to develop the abilities of nurse educators to meet the complex role of nurse educator in a challenging and rapidly changing reality.

The researcher will build a model for an innovative training model for nurse educator role in Israel and elaborate a management plan for its implementation, as a proposal for the Nursing division and the national head nurse of Israel in order to set a new public policy for the nurse educator role training requirements.

The nurse educator role is a complicated role. A nurse educator cannot stay behind when medicine advances, the population changes, the students are different, and technologies leap all the knowledge and skills a few steps forward. It is not possible to keep relying on the fact that nurse educators teach nursing only by being nurses.

Therefore, the nursing division in Israel must set policy regarding the core subjects to be taught for this role and authorize the specific training framework.

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