

ABSTRACT

The role of nurse managers is crucial for all healthcare organizations, because they are the link, that brings the organization's strategic plan to the center of action, through direct patient care. Ward nurses and head nurses significantly influence the fulfillment of requirements set by the healthcare organizations' stakeholders. The methods they use to take on leadership roles have an impact on the future of nursing. The main goal of this thesis is to define the competencies that the ward and head nurses need to manage this responsibility successfully. Defining true competencies based on head and ward nurses' professional experiences can contribute to streamlining the creation of (self)assessment tools for nurse managers at mid-level management. It can also help nurses with setting personal-development and career goals as well as serve Human Resources specialists as an effective tool for selecting the best-suited nurses for managerial positions. Last, but not least, defining competencies can be a resource for creating effective education programs for healthcare managers. The research for this thesis was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, two focus groups were held. Based on these two focus groups, a total of fifty competencies, divided into four main competency themes and seventeen competence groups, were defined by the *scissors and sort* method. In the second stage of the research, these competencies were tested by a questionnaire on a large sample of the population. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed by a Chi-squared test of independence for the pivot table. If a dependence was confirmed, the data were analyzed using the so called Z-test. The results of the questionnaire confirmed the relevancy and importance of the competencies identified in the focus groups. At the same time, the questionnaire did not show that nurse managers' education was dependent on the competences used. The dependence of the survey participants' specific job positions was reflected only in the case of two competencies within the competency theme *professional nursing skills*.

Keywords: Competencies, Nursing management, Ward nurse, Head nurse, Competency based management.