

Nursing Manager Experience in the Covid-19 Pandemic Disaster Situation at RSUP H. Adam Malik

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic that began in late 2019 has brought major changes to various aspects of life, including the health sector. As the frontline in providing services, nursing managers have an important role in managing human resources, patient care flows, and maintaining the safety and health of medical personnel. This study aims to explore the experiences of nursing managers in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic disaster situation, as well as the strategies they use to manage the challenges that arise. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenological design. A total of 10 nursing managers working in the emergency room participated in in-depth interviews to explore their experiences during the pandemic. The results of the study identified five main themes, namely: (1) Challenges in human resource management, (2) The role of leadership and effective communication, (3) Innovation and adaptation in care protocols, (4) Psychological support for nursing staff, and (5) Learning and preparedness for the future. This study shows that nursing managers have a very vital role in dealing with the crisis during the pandemic, with effective management, open communication, and attention to the psychological well-being of staff being the keys to success in maintaining quality of care amidst heavy workloads. These findings are expected to provide deeper insight into the role of nursing managers in global health disaster situations and provide recommendations for improving future preparedness.

Keywords: Communication, COVID-19 Pandemic, Human Resource Management, Nursing Manager, Psychological Support.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in late 2019, drastically changed almost every aspect of human life, including the health sector. The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated the pandemic as a global crisis that requires a rapid and coordinated response. One of the parties most affected by health services is nursing staff. As the frontline in providing care to patients, the role of nursing managers is important in managing human resources, patient care flows, and maintaining the safety and health of medical personnel, especially in unprecedented disaster situations (Zhi et al., 2020).

Nursing managers are responsible for managing the nursing team and implementing health policies in hospitals and other healthcare facilities. In the midst of a pandemic, nursing managers must not only manage daily operations and patient care flows but also manage other major challenges, such as the scarcity of personal protective equipment (PPE), limited number of nurses, and increased psychological stress on medical staff due to the extraordinary workload (Papanikolaou et al., 2021). Adjusting to new medical procedures, setting up safe treatment rooms, and coordinating among various medical professions are increasingly complex tasks amid uncertainty and rapid changes in policies.

In this context, nursing managers face challenges in maintaining team morale and motivation as well as providing emotional support to frontline nursing staff (Tzeng & Yin, 2020). In addition, they face the need to manage limited resources and prioritize patients with varying degrees of disease severity. With such great pressure, the ability of nursing managers to adapt to and overcome crises is key to ensuring the smooth delivery of quality care services in hospitals.

Research shows that one of the biggest challenges faced by nurses during the pandemic is stress due to heavy workloads and feelings of anxiety regarding their safety (Mazzetti et al., 2020).

Many nurses feel stressed, both physically due to long working hours and psychologically due to fear of the risk of exposure to the virus. Several studies have shown that nurses working in intensive care units or COVID-19 referral hospitals experience high levels of stress, which can affect the quality of care provided and mental health (Tzeng & Yin, 2020). Therefore, nursing managers must be able to provide psychological support to their teams, create a safe and supportive work environment, and implement strategies to reduce burnout that can affect nurses' performance and well-being. Therefore, it is important for nursing managers to provide psychological support to nurses and space for them to rest, communicate, and receive relevant training on new protocols.

In addition to these challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of new technologies in the healthcare system, including the use of information systems to track and manage COVID-19 patients. Nursing managers must be able to implement these technologies, ensuring that the staff are well trained and can use the systems effectively. However, adapting to rapidly changing medical procedures, such as the use of ventilators, safe intubation procedures, and new ways of managing patients with serious conditions, also requires special attention from nursing managers to ensure there are no gaps in the quality of care provided (Vollman et al., 2020).

It is important to note that the role of nurse managers is not limited to the technical aspects of care management. They are also responsible for maintaining and developing leadership skills within nursing teams. Effective nurse managers can increase team motivation and morale even in the midst of major crises. Research shows that nurse managers who are able to demonstrate strong leadership, open communication, and genuine emotional support can help reduce burnout and increase job satisfaction among nursing staff during a pandemic (Mazzetti et al., 2020).

The pandemic has forced nursing managers to face tremendous uncertainty, with policies and guidelines changing frequently. In such situations, nursing managers must have the skills to quickly adapt to change and lead their teams to make informed decisions. Managers must also be able to ensure that existing standard operating procedures (SOPs) are implemented effectively despite rapid changes in care methods and government regulations set to address the pandemic. For example, hospitals must set up safe treatment rooms for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients, and implement policies to separate medical teams based on potential exposure to infected patients (Sullivan et al., 2020).

This study aimed to explore the experiences and strategies used by nursing managers in facing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The main focus of this study was to understand the challenges faced by nursing managers in managing resources, improving the quality of care, and maintaining staff well-being during the pandemic. This study will also explore the various innovations and approaches implemented by nursing managers to improve the healthcare system's response to this disaster. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide deeper insights into the important role of nursing managers in global health disaster situations and provide recommendations for strengthening preparedness and response in the future.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenological design. Ten nursing managers participated in this study. The criteria set for participants included: nursing managers who work in the emergency room, have a minimum bachelor's degree in nursing, have experience in managing emergency rooms during the COVID-19 pandemic, are communicative and participatory, and are willing to participate by signing a research consent letter and giving verbal consent.

This study was conducted at RSUP. H. Adam Malik implemented interviews conducted directly and face-to-face, based on the agreement between the researcher and the participant. The location and time of the interview were adjusted based on the agreement between the researcher and the participant.

The data were collected through in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using a limited number of open-ended and unstructured questions, aimed at exploring participants' opinions and views. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, and was recorded using a recording device. The questions asked to participants were based on an

interview guide and developed through probing techniques, giving participants the freedom to explain their experiences in depth to obtain the true essence of their experiences.

Data collection tools included demographic data questionnaires, interview guides, voice recorders, and field notes. The researcher acted as the main instrument in this study, as well as the main data collection tool. In the initial stage, participants' data were obtained through demographic questionnaires.

Data analysis in this study used the Colaizzi approach, which consists of the following steps: 1) listening to and writing down all interview results that have been collected; 2) identifying significant statements (extraction); 3) arranging meaning for each significant statement; 4) grouping the meanings obtained into categories; 5) integrating the results into a comprehensive description of the theme of the experiences expressed by participants; 6) identifying the basic structure of the phenomenon; 7) reconstructing with participants for validation; and 8) if necessary, new relevant data will be analyzed to produce the final research product.

3. RESULTS

The results of the study related to the characteristics of the participants will be explained, including sex, age, education, and length of service. Based on the data obtained (Table 4.2), the participants consisted of four men (40%) and six women (60%). As for the age distribution of the participants, three people (30%) were aged 31-40 years, seven people (70%) were aged 41-50 years, and no participants were over 51 years old. For the level of education, all participants had a Professional Nursing education, with a total of 10 people (100%), and none had a Diploma III education (0%). Regarding the length of service in the IGD room, one person (10%) had a length of service of less than 1 year, four people (40%) had a length of service between 1 and 10 years, and five people (50%) had a length of service of more than 10 years.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Karakteristik	Frekuensi	Persentase
Gender		
Male	4	40
Female	6	60
Age		
31-40 Years	3	30
41-50 Years	7	70
>51 Years	-	-
Education		
Diploma III	-	-
Profession/Nursing	10	100
Master	-	-
Years of service		
<1 Year	1	10
1-10 Years	4	40
>10 Years	6	60

The results of the data analysis using the Colaizzi method contained five themes: (1) Human Resource Management Challenges, (2) role of leadership and communication, (3) Innovation and Adaptation in Care Protocols, and (4) Psychological Support for Nursing Staff.

4. DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on the global health system, including that of Indonesia. Nursing managers face major challenges in managing human resources, ensuring that the quality of care is maintained, and maintaining staff welfare amidst drastically increased workloads. This study aimed to explore the experiences of nursing managers in the COVID-19 pandemic disaster situation and to understand how they manage the challenges that arise during the pandemic. Based on the results of this study, there are several important findings that need to be discussed regarding the experiences of nursing managers in dealing with the pandemic.

1. Human Resource Management Challenges

One of the main challenges faced by nursing managers is human resource management, particularly in terms of meeting the increasing need for medical personnel. The limited availability of nurses in the Emergency Room (IGD) requires nursing managers to efficiently and effectively plan the placement of nursing personnel. This is in line with the findings of a study by Tzeng and Yin (2020), which showed that nursing managers must have the ability to adapt quickly to overcome the shortage of medical personnel that occurred during the pandemic. Managing nurses exposed to COVID-19 and ensuring that they get enough rest is also a challenge for nursing managers.

Many nursing managers expressed difficulties in managing the stress and burnout experienced by nursing staff due to heavy workloads and the risk of exposure to the virus. This stress is not only caused by the exhaustion of physical conditions but also by the constant uncertainty about the development of the pandemic and the changes in policies that must be followed. For example, in this study, most participants expressed concerns about the safety of nursing staff as well as difficulties in maintaining motivation and work enthusiasm under stressful conditions.

2. The Role of Leadership and Communication

Nursing managers' leadership plays a critical role in addressing challenges during pandemics. This study found that nursing managers who have good communication skills and are able to build supportive relationships with nursing staff can help reduce anxiety and improve team performance. Nursing managers who are transparent, provide clear information, and listen to nurses' concerns can create a more positive work climate and increase the job satisfaction of nursing staff.

In addition, most participants stated that effective communication between nursing managers and other medical teams, such as doctors and administrative staff, is very important for ensuring good coordination in the management of COVID-19 patients. This is in line with the findings of Lambert et al. (2021), who stated that nursing managers who are able to facilitate open communication and coordination between teams can improve the quality of care and reduce stress among medical personnel.

3. Innovation and Adaptation in Care Protocols

The COVID-19 pandemic has also forced nursing managers to adapt quickly to changes in the care procedures and policies implemented by the government. This study showed that nursing managers innovated in the preparation of care protocols, such as the implementation of a system for separating COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients in the emergency room, as well as the use of technology to monitor patient conditions more efficiently. This innovation is important to ensure that the quality of care is maintained despite a significant increase in the number of patients.

Most nursing managers also emphasized the importance of ongoing training for staff, especially regarding the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and new medical procedures. Regular training helps nurses feel more prepared and confident in providing safe care to patients, as well as in reducing concerns about potential virus transmission. This is in accordance with the results of a study by Jiang et al. (2020), which stated that training and preparedness are important aspects of managing medical personnel during a pandemic.

4. Psychological Support for Nursing Staff

One of the important findings of this study is the need for psychological support for the nursing staff. High stress, physical and mental exhaustion, and anxiety about the safety of themselves and their families are problems most nurses face during the pandemic. Nursing managers who pay attention to the emotional and psychological well-being of staff, such as providing space to rest, counseling, or awards for good performance, can help maintain staff motivation and morale.

This study also found that most participants felt that attention to staff mental well-being was one of the top priorities for nursing managers. This research is in line with the results of Mazzetti et al. (2020), which revealed that good mental care for nursing staff can prevent burnout and increase job satisfaction.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explored the experiences of nursing managers in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the results of this study, several important conclusions can be drawn.

- 1) **The Role of Nursing Managers:** Nursing managers play an important role in managing the crisis arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. They are responsible for managing human resources, setting care protocols, and ensuring that the quality of service is maintained amidst a heavy workload.
- 2) **Challenges in Managing Nursing Staff:** One of the main challenges faced is managing a limited number of nursing staff, especially in situations of a surge in COVID-19 patients. Nursing managers must ensure the effective distribution of the workforce, maintain the physical and mental well-being of staff, and provide the support needed to prevent fatigue and burnout.
- 3) **Effective Communication and Leadership:** Strong leadership and effective communication are essential for ensuring good coordination among nursing staff, doctors, and other medical teams. Nursing managers who can communicate clearly and openly with staff are successful in creating a more positive work environment and reducing anxiety among nurses.
- 4) **Innovation in Care Protocols:** The COVID-19 pandemic has forced nursing managers to design more efficient and safe care protocols, including managing the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and dividing the care space for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients. This innovation is essential to ensure the safety of patients and medical personnel.

- 5) **Psychological Support for Staff:** Stress and mental exhaustion are significant problems among the nursing staff. Therefore, psychological support is essential for maintaining the mental well-being of staff. Nursing managers who pay attention to the emotional needs of the staff can help reduce stress levels and increase job satisfaction.
- 6) **Learning and Future Preparation:** The experience during the pandemic has provided many lessons for nursing managers, including the importance of flexibility, preparedness, and leadership skills in emergency situations. These lessons will be useful in preparing nursing staff to face similar challenges in the future.

Overall, nursing managers' experience during the COVID-19 pandemic shows that good management of human resources, leadership, communication, and attention to the well-being of nursing staff are key factors in dealing with health disaster situations, such as this pandemic.

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Based on the experience in this research, several limitations were obtained that the researcher had; namely, it was difficult to determine the right time with their busy schedules and tasks, as well as external disturbances such as loud noises and the sound of other nurses coming to call or just saying hello.

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