Facilitating Effective Performance Appraisal of Nurses

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With growing complexity in the health sciences and increasing specialization of health professions, more rigorous controls are required to ensure that health practitioners possess sufficient knowledge and skills to deliver safe and effective healthcare. Nursing’s major goal is providing nursing care to all within available human, financial & organizational resources, nursing service is committed to maintain its standards of patient care. It can be achieved only by evaluating the service’s, periodically and taking necessary steps to improve. Gulani (1976) stated that evaluation of nursing services is difficult because of its complex nature, both in the hospital and community settings.

The researcher conducted an exploratory study to assess the knowledge and opinion of Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses towards evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, working in various Medical/Surgical departments of selected hospital of Delhi. The author also attempted to develop a comprehensive performance appraisal proforma in the second phase of her study. The study was conducted in 1999 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a degree of Masters in Nursing at the Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur College of Nursing, University of Delhi.

The Objective of the study were:

(i) To assess and compare the knowledge of Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses about the evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses.

(ii) To assess and compare the opinion of subjects about existing as well as desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses.

(iii) To determine the relationship between knowledge and opinion of subjects about existing as well as desired evaluation strategies.

(iv) To develop a comprehensive performance appraisal proforma for Staff Nurses and determine its acceptability from Experts, Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses.

The researcher formulated following hypothesis for the study:

1. There is a significant difference between the mean knowledge as well as opinion scores of Nurse Managers and that of Staff Nurses about the evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, as measured by the structured knowledge questionnaire and opinionative, respectively, at 0.05 level of significance.

2. There is a significant relationship between the knowledge and opinion of subjects about the evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, at 0.05 level of significance.

3. There is a significant difference between the mean opinion scores of subjects about the desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, as measured by the structured opinionative at 0.05 level of significance.

4. There is a significant relationship between knowledge and opinion of Nurse Managers as well as Staff Nurses about desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, at 0.05 level of significance.

The conceptual framework for the study was primarily adopted from Haar’s Systems Model for performance appraisal and the steps of development of performance assessment instruments given by WHO (1980). These models provided a logical process for developing the performance appraisal tool for performance evaluation of Staff Nurses.

The study was based on the assumption that the subjects have some knowledge about various evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of nurses. It was assumed that the performance of Staff Nurses can be evaluated by using comprehensive performance appraisal tool. Also, that there is some evaluation of nurses for which they express their dissatisfaction.

An exploratory survey approach was adopted by the researcher.

The sample subjects comprised of two groups – Sixty Nurse Managers working at different administrative levels and forty Staff Nurses working in different Medical/Surgical departments of selected hospitals of Delhi. The sampling technique used was Purposive sampling for the Nurse Managers and simple random sampling for the Staff Nurses.
The instruments used for obtaining data were:

(i) A structured knowledge questionnaire to assess the knowledge of Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses about the evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses.

(ii) Structured opinionative to assess the opinion of Nurses Managers and Staff Nurses about the evaluation strategies adopted as well as desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses.

(iii) A structured opinionative for experts working at different administrative levels, to identify the criteria for developing a comprehensive performance appraisal proforma for Staff Nurses.

Based on the opinions and suggestions sought from these experts and sample subjects as well as an extensive literature review, the researcher designed and developed a comprehensive proforma along with a supporting evaluation guide for Nurse Managers for effective performance appraisal of Staff Nurses.

(iv) A structured opinionative to assess the acceptability of the developed proforma for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses from experts, Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses.

The try-out of study tools was conducted to assess the practicability of the tools in generating data. Item analysis was done. The item discriminatory values ranged from 0.3 to 1.0 and item difficulty values ranged from 30% to 80%.

A pilot study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the tools, to find out the feasibility of the study and to decide on the plan of statistical analysis. The pilot study subjects were not included in the final study.

Data analysis was done by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentages were computed to describe the sample characteristics. Mean, Median, Mode and Standard deviation were computed for assessment of knowledge and opinions regarding adopted and desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Nurses. The 't' test was employed for making further comparison between the groups in terms of their knowledge and opinion about adopted evaluation strategies. The product moment coefficient of correlation was computed to determine the relationship between knowledge and opinion of the two groups about the adopted and desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses. Frequency and percentages, mean, median, mode and standard deviation were calculated for ascertaining the acceptability of the performance appraisal proforma developed by the researcher from the Experts, Nurses Managers and Staff Nurses.

The findings on data analysis revealed the following:

(i) Characteristics of the sample subjects

Age wise distribution of subjects showed that 90% of the Nurse Managers were of the age of above 31 years and 10% of them were in the age group of 21-30 years; whereas 70% of the Staff Nurses belonged to the age group of 21-30 years and the rest were above 31 years of age.

Department wise distribution of subjects showed that 55% of Nurse Managers and 62.5% of Staff Nurses were working in Medical departments and the rest in Surgical departments.

(ii) The significant findings of the study were:

Both the Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses had inadequate knowledge about evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, as evident from their mean knowledge scores which are 64.13% and 63.88% of the maximum score, respectively (being less than predetermined minimum level of 65%).

Both the Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses did not differ in their knowledge levels (i.e. had almost similar knowledge levels) as evident from a non sig-
significant 't' value \( t(98) = 0.724, p=0.05 \).

Both the Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses had unfavorable opinion about evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, as evident from their mean opinion scores which are 74.8% and 73.47% of the maximum score, respectively (being less than the predetermined minimum level of 75%).

The Nurse Managers had significantly lower unfavorable opinion about the adopted evaluation strategies as compared to Staff Nurses, as evident from the 't' value \( t(98) = 7.647, p<0.05 \).

There was significant low positive correlation between knowledge and opinion of Nurse Managers about evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, as evident from the product moment coefficient of correlation \( r=0.4 \).

There was non-significant and a very low (almost negligible) positive correlation between knowledge and opinion of Staff Nurses about evaluation strategies adopted for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, as evident from the product moment coefficient of correlation \( r=0.029 \).

Both the Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses had favourable opinion about desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses as developed by the researcher based on identified and accepted criteria, as evident from their mean opinion scores which are 91.4% and 90.096% of the maximum score, respectively.

The Nurse Managers had significantly higher favourable opinion about the desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, as compared to the Staff Nurses, evident from the 't' value \( t(98) = 5.865, p<0.05 \).

There was significant and moderate positive correlation between the knowledge and opinion of Nurse Managers \( r=0.574 \) as well as Staff Nurses \( r=0.694 \) about the desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses, as evident from their respective product moment coefficient of correlation values.

Majority of experts (92.87%) Nurses Managers (86.45%) and Staff Nurses (92.43%) expressed their favorable opinion for the proforma developed by the researcher for performance appraisal of Staff Nurses "to a great extent" as evident from their mean acceptability opinion scores which are 95.38% (for Nurse Managers) and 97.47% (for Staff Nurses) of the maximum score (being more than the predetermined minimum level of 75%). They also expressed that the developed proforma is comprehensive to assess the performance of Staff Nurses. They recommended for not only an experimental study to assess its practicability but also to conduct a training programme for the Nurse Managers to use the developed proforma effectively.

There were some limitations of the present study. The time constraint did not allow the researcher to try out and test the reliability and practicability of the performance appraisal proforma. Also, the acceptability of the proforma developed by the researcher could be determined only from few subjects.

The Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses involved in the study, were drawn from various Medical Surgical Departments of the hospitals only and hence wider applicability of the tools is yet to be determined. The structured data collection tools provided for limited information, which could otherwise have been obtained from the subjects with other types of tools and techniques.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered for future research:

Besides replicating on large samples, a study may be conducted to tryout the developed performance appraisal proforma for Staff Nurses to establish its reliability and practicability.

A study may be conducted to identify various factors influencing the attitude and skills of Nurse Managers in performance appraisal as well as the problems in performance appraisal. A long term study may also be carried out to determine the effect of performance appraisal on Nurses' performance.

A study may also be conducted to identify training needs of Nurse Managers to organize training programmes for improving their evaluation skills.

The criteria selected today, must be reviewed periodically, to meet the needs of our fast changing health care system.
adequate opportunities to nurses to express their feedback about evaluation done by them. The Nurse Educators should strive for instilling a positive attitude towards performance appraisal among the present and future nurses, so as to enable them to view it as a process or a tool for self-development. They should organize regular training programmes, workshops, etc. to keep the Nurse Managers abreast of latest tools and techniques of evaluation for effective performance appraisal. The professional organizations, besides developing effective tools, must give a more serious consideration to performance appraisal with an objective approach for making personnel decisions viz., promotions, salary increases, etc. with a view to improve quality of nursing care to clients through improvement of personnel’s performance.

Some selected references:

Books:

Journals:


Unpublished Master’s Thesis
- Devi, Sarada; A study to evaluate Nursing care given to selected group of patients in an Army Hospital: 1975.