



Assessing Nursing Internship Student's Knowledge in Delegating Authority

Ms. Ajitha Thankarajan Rajennal^{*1,2}, Ms. Hilda Tongco Lopez³, Ms. Manal Alnashmi Alruwaili⁴,
Ms. Shahad Majed Aqeel Alenezi⁵, Ms. Shmookh Ibrahim Awadh Alenezi⁶, Ms. Atlal Ateeq M
Alruwaili⁷

^{*1} Lecturer, Department of Medical surgical Nursing, College of Nursing, Northern Border university, Arar, Saudi Arabia, Orcid Id 0009-0002-4928-3294

²Research Scholar, Department of Medical Surgical Nursing, College of Nursing, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Chennai. India,

³Lecturer, Department of Emergency and Intensive Care Nursing, College of Nursing, Northern Border university, Arar, Saudi Arabia,

⁴ER Nurse Specialist, Prince Abdulaziz Bin Musaad Hospital, Arar, Saudi Arabia, EMail Id:

⁵ICU Nurse Specialist Prince Abdulaziz Bin Musaad Hospital, Arar, Saudi Arabia, EMail Id:

⁶ICU Nurse Specialist North Medical Tower, Arar, Saudi Arabia, EMail Id:

⁷ Internship, Northern Border University, Arar, Saudi Arabia,

ABSTRACT

Background: Effective delegation of authority was an important skill in nursing practice, allowing for improvement in time management, teamwork, and high-quality patient care. Teaching delegation to internship nurses was essential. Nursing internship students often face challenges while delegating nursing tasks due to less exposure to clinical training. Nursing internship students should be aware of their knowledge level in delegation of authority because strong delegation skills are necessary to implement the current skill mix and changes in patient-centered care and safety. **Objective:** To assess the Nursing Internship Student's knowledge regarding delegation of authority, at Northern Border University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. **Methods:** A descriptive non-experimental study design was adopted, and forty Internship nursing students were selected through a non-probability convenient sampling technique, the nursing internship students were asked to complete a semi-structured questionnaire to assess the knowledge level in the delegation of authority. **Result:** The findings revealed that 77.5% of the internship students showed good knowledge whereas there was a significant gap in practical delegation skills such as handling subordinates, fear of losing authority, and effective task assignment. **Conclusion:** The study revealed that nursing education plays a vital role in reducing the gap between theory and practice by enhancing nursing curriculum in delegation training through simulation-based training and mentorship programs thereby it will ultimately improve the quality of the health care delivery system and patient care.

Keywords: *Nursing; Internship Students; Delegation; Authority.*

INTRODUCTION

Delegation of authority is a key concept in nursing practice, particularly in emerging and intricate healthcare delivery systems and increasing diverse patient demands in healthcare systems. Effectual delegation allows nurses to manage time effectively, prioritize nursing tasks, and assure



high-quality care. However, the nursing students in the internship program have to be focused on delegation of authority, because it often remains a challenge due to limited and insufficient formal training. (Nursing Center., 2017)

The American Nurses Association (ANA) defines delegation as a transfer of responsibility for the performance of a task from one individual to another while retaining accountability for the outcome. It is an important ability for nurses, requiring knowledge of tasks and responsibility and competent communication, decision-making, and leadership skills. Studies show that nursing interns mostly find it difficult to delegate due to a decrease level of confidence, anxiety, and fear of negative outcomes in the healthcare delivery system. (Lee et al., 2023)

Preparedness in delegation is vital in ensuring patient care and safety, improving teamwork, and strengthening the efficacy of the health care delivery system. Incompetent delegation leads to work overload for nurses, burnout, and increasing chances of error in task performance (Smith et al., 2022). Furthermore, it's necessary to understand the knowledge gap and training needs of nursing internship students and to equip them with the skills that they require for effective delegation in their profession.

Nowadays, there is an increase in the number of nursing assistants in the health care environment, so the registered nurse needs to be skillful with adequate leadership skills to assure safe delegation practice. (Carol Crevacore 2022)

Delegation often connected with other core skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, prioritization, and communication. The researcher concluded that delegation should not be considered in isolation from these solid foundation skills. Furthermore, delegation of authority is often a difficult concept, something that newly qualified nurses feel unprepared for. It is therefore vital that preregistration nursing education incorporate the development of this essential skill (School of Nursing, 2021).

The main objective of this study is to explore the knowledge of delegating authority among nursing internship students. This study helps to identify the barriers and to implement effective delegation practice among internship nurses, the result of this study may suggest nursing curriculum enhancements, continuous training programs, and mentorship to encourage and support the student nurses during their transition to practice.

Need and significance of the study



Preparedness in the delegation of authority is important for internship nursing students as they transfer theoretical knowledge into practical application in clinical settings. Delegation is a keystone of nursing practice. Allowing for the efficient distribution of tasks among the team members, promoting time management, and enhancing high-quality nursing care to the patients. However, it's a complex skill that requires not only knowledge but also awareness and understanding of the team's robust, legal as well as ethical responsibility, and also effective communication strategies.

Formal delegation helps to minimize errors by assuring that the tasks are assigned properly to the most capable and trained team members. Lack of delegation skills leads to overburdening and burnout; thereby it leads to reduced work efficiency and increased chances of mistakes. Delegation is an integral part of leadership development. The internship nursing students in their internship program should be involved in the process of delegation, which will help the nursing internship students to prepare themselves for the roles that require skills in decision-making and team management in their future professional careers. (Lee & Kim, 2023)

Effective delegation develops cooperation and team spirit among healthcare professionals. This will teach the nursing intern students to perform their tasks in collaboration with other healthcare teams, fostering a supportive and conducive work area. (Smith et al., 2022)

Preparedness in the delegation of authority puts up the confidence and competence of the internship students, empowering them to manage their duties and responsibilities efficiently. This confidence provides them the ability to undergo a graceful transition from trainees to professionals Yoon, J., et al. (2016).

Most of the nursing internship students demonstrated gaps in their educational program and clinical experiences regarding their preparation for a delegator or supervisory role. Given the importance of such skills, universities must provide pre-registration student nurses with the education necessary to develop delegation strategies and to adapt to their evolving professional role (Hasson, 2022).

It's mandatory to understand the overall factors that influence the nursing internship student's knowledge and preparedness in the delegation of authority, which is the key component for addressing the gaps between education and practice. Studies have highlighted the importance of mentorship programs, simulation training, and structured feedback to support internship students



in acquiring essential skills Carin Magnusson, 2017). Besides, it's essential to identify and label the common hurdles, such as fear of conflict, lack of confidence and inadequate clinical training can highly improve their preparedness for delegation tasks.

This research aims to emphasize the significance of preparing the internship nursing students for delegation of authority with the implication for nursing curriculum development. Policy making and enhancing clinical training. Identifying this gap secures future nurses to prepare themselves to meet the needs of modern healthcare settings, eventually aiding patient outcomes and the healthcare workforce.

The delegation of authority has many benefits in patient care centers such as reducing the nursing workload and nurturing team spirit; however, delegation also has some demerits such as missed nursing care, which directly affects the patient care Hence its very important to follow the principles of delegation in order to provide high quality of nursing care.(Mahboubbeh et,al 2024)

Statement of problem

Assessing Nursing Internship Student's Knowledge in Delegating Authority, Northern Border University, Arar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Objective

1. To assess the Nursing Internship Student's knowledge of delegating authority, Northern Border University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
2. To find the association between the selected demographic variables

Operational definition

1. Delegation: Assigning patient care and tasks by the team leader that has to be carried out by the subordinates in the team.
2. Authority: The right to act in circumstances where one has been delegated responsibility and accepts it.
3. Delegation of Authority: This technique allows the team leader to provide the subordinate the authority to complete tasks on his or her behalf.
4. Internship students: Nursing students who have completed the four-year baccalaureate program from the College of Nursing, Northern Border University, and continuing practical training in the hospital of the Northern region.

Inclusion criteria:



1. Nursing internship students in the College of Nursing, Northern Border University.
2. Internship students who can speak and read English and Arabic.
3. Female students only.

Exclusion criteria:

1. Nursing internship students, who are not willing to participate in the study from the College of Nursing, Northern Border University.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: - In this study, the researchers adopted Non- experimental, descriptive design.

The setting of the study: This research study was conducted in the College of Nursing, Northern Border University Arar, during the academic year 2022-2023.

Study period: - The data was collected for one month from January 2023 to February 2023.

Target population: - The target population of this study was the Nursing internship students at, the College of Nursing, Northern Border University.

Study Population: - The study Population is Nursing internship students 2022-2023 batch, College of Nursing, Northern Border University.

Sampling method: - Non-probability Convenient Sampling was adopted based on inclusion and exclusion for all 40 internship students.

Sample Size: - The sample size of the study consists of forty Nursing internship students.

Selected Demographic Variables: - Age, marital status, department of interest to work in the hospital, and work shift.

Description of the questionnaire

A Semi-Structured knowledge questionnaire prepared by the researchers was used. It consisted of two parts:

Part 1- Includes the demographic variables (Age, marital status, Department of interest to work in the hospital, and work shift.)

Part 2 -The questionnaire consists of 20 items (Yes or No type) to assess the knowledge on preparedness towards delegation of authority among nursing internship students. All "Yes" responses were scored 1 mark and all "No" responses were scored 0 marks. The total score is 20.

Scoring: -

- Excellent Knowledge of delegating authority- Total Score 15 and above.



- Average Knowledge of delegating authority- Total Score 10-14.
- Poor Knowledge of delegating authority - Total Score less than 9.

Validity of the tool

Both the English and Arabic version of the tool was reviewed by two professionals from Nursing leadership and management department.

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted among 4 internship nursing students which is ten percent of the study sample (40) to identify the feasibility, applicability, and clarity of the tool. The internship students in the pilot study were excluded from the main study. The period of pilot study was done and the validity and reliability of the tool was obtained and the tool was fixed for actual research data collection.

Data collection procedure

The subjects were selected through a non-probability convenient sampling technique and informed consent obtained. A semi-structured questionnaire in English and Arabic language was used to assess the Knowledge of delegating authority among internship students through Google form. Only it took 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The duration of data collection was four weeks.

Ethical considerations

The study was conducted after getting approval from the following:

1. Informed consent from subjects and assured to maintain confidentiality and secrecy of the study participants.

The researcher does not force the participants to participate in the study, and they have the right to leave the study if they are not comfortable.

Data analysis Data analysis used descriptive analysis and inferential statistics through the statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0. The data were tabulated. Descriptive analysis (frequency and percentage) for the variable and chi-square test were done to find the association.

Limitations



1. The study was limited to internship students, at the College of Nursing, Northern Border University.
2. The study was limited to 4 weeks.
3. The sample size was limited to 40 internship nursing students.
4. Non- probability Convenience sampling was used.

RESULT

In this study, statistical analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher utilized a descriptive statistic (number, percentage, mean, and SD) in describing the main variable. The first category of data in this research is socio-demographic correlates, the following are as follows:

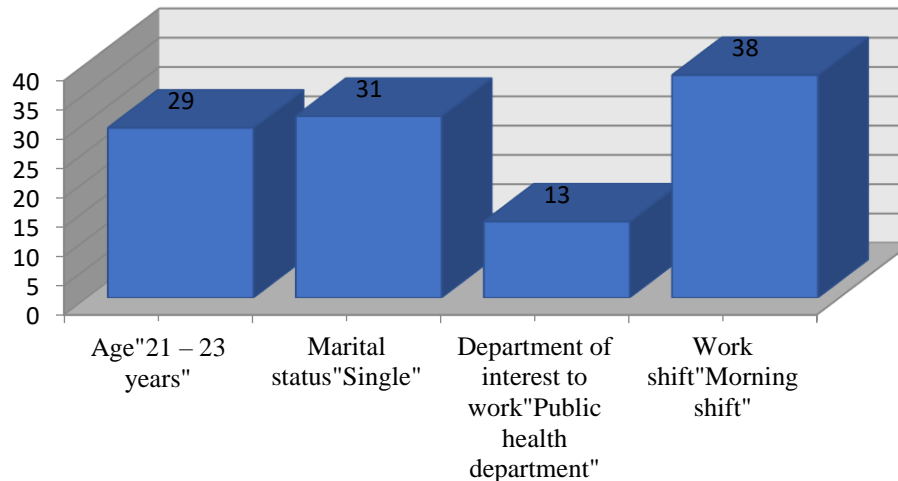
Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants (N=40)

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Age in years		
less than 21 years	3	7.5 %
21 – 23 years	29	72.5%
Above 23 years	8	20%
Marital status		
Single	31	77.5%
Married	6	15%
Separated	3	7.5%
Department of interest to work		
Medical surgical department	6	15%
Maternal and Child Health Department	9	22.5%
Public health department	13	32.5%
Critical and emergency department	12	30%
Work shift		



Morning shift	38	95%
Evening shift	2	5%
Night shift	0	0%

Figure 1 : Summary of Socio- demographic



As shown in the table 1 and figure 1, it has been clearly shown that most of the participants were between the age group of 21 – 23 years (72.5%) and mostly Single (77.5%) And they worked in morning shifts (95%) and they preferred to work in Public Health department (32.5%).

Table 2: Knowledge of Preparedness towards Delegation of Authority among Internship Students with Overall number and percentage

Knowledge questions	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
1. Do you take account of staff's skills prior to delegating patient care?	37	92.5%	3	7.5%
2. Do you define responsibilities for each subordinate and make this information known to others?	36	90%	4	10%
3. Do you give staff feedback following delegation?	32	80.3%	8	20%
4. Do you get feedback from subordinates to improve your delegation skills?	35	87.5%	5	12.5%
5. Do you think you lose respect because of delegation?	15	37.5%	25	62.5%
6. In delegation, do you make clear why to do the task?	38	95%	2	5%
7. Do you think you have received sufficient educational preparation to delegate at work?	30	75%	10	25%



8. Do you think effective delegation improves staff development and satisfaction, which results in better patient care and patient satisfaction?	35	87.5%	5	12.5%
9. Do you find it clear which tasks can be delegated to nursing auxiliaries?	37	92.5%	3	7.5%
10. Do you think you have gained sufficient skills to face subordinates' negative reactions when delegating tasks?	30	75%	10	25%
11. Do you think you are familiar with legal responsibilities when delegating tasks?	36	90%	4	10%
12. If you delegate work that is not within a subordinate's normal job, be sure to explain why.	37	92.5%	3	7.5%
13. Learn to live with the work that is not done to the way you would do it.	32	80%	8	20%
14. You will delegate the bad jobs, saving the good ones for yourself	30	75%	10	25%
15. In delegation, do you make clear who is to do the task?	38	95%	2	5%
16. Do you become annoyed when you offer clear directions but the work is not completed properly?	35	87.5%	5	12.5%
17. Do you Reinforce good performance?	40	100%	0	0%
18. Do you follow up with the subordinate to ensure that the work is completed properly, taking care not to over-supervise?	37	92.5%	3	7.5%
19. Do you frequently find yourself doing tasks that others could complete more quickly?	38	70%	12	30%
20. I haven't noticed any time savings through delegation.	22	55%	18	45%

Note: Correct answers are in blue shade.

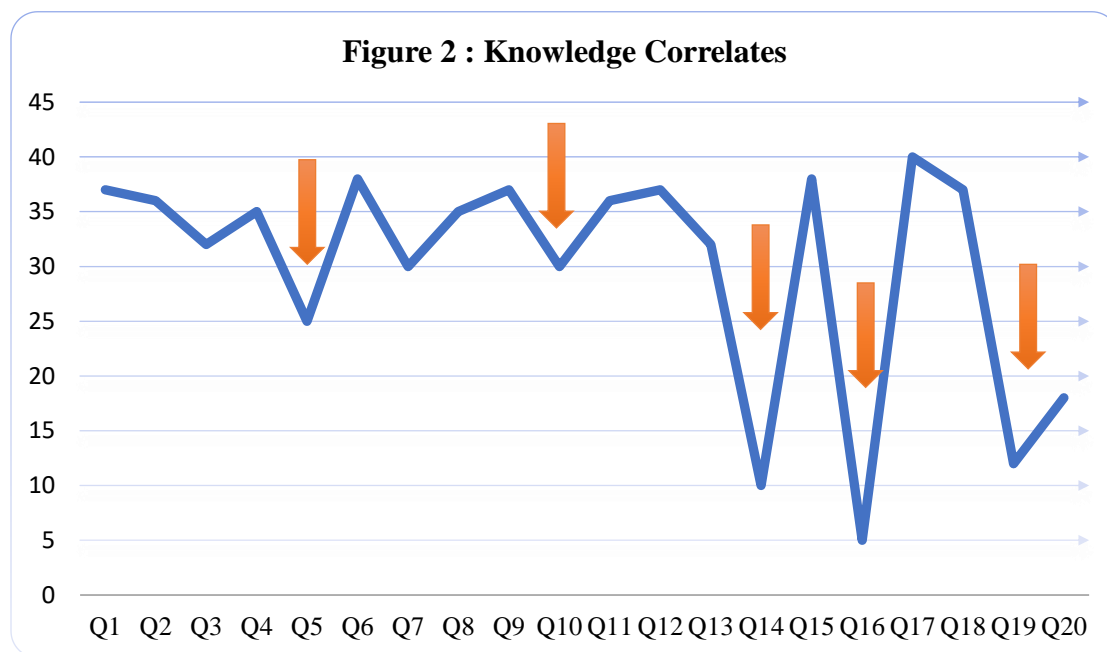
Table 3: Knowledge Correlates towards Delegation of Authority among Internship Students with Overall number and percentage

Knowledge Variables	Correct	
	N	Percentage %
Q1	37	92.5%
Q2	36	90%
Q3	32	80.3%
Q4	35	87.5%
Q5	25	62.5%
Q6	38	95%
Q7	30	75%



Q8	35	87.5%
Q9	37	92.5%
Q10	30	75%
Q11	36	90%
Q12	37	92.5%
Q13	32	80%
Q14	10	25%
Q15	38	95%
Q16	5	12.5%
Q17	40	100%
Q18	37	92.5%
Q19	12	30%
Q20	18	45%
Overall (800)	600	75%

FIGURE 2 - Knowledge on preparedness towards delegation of authority among Internship Students



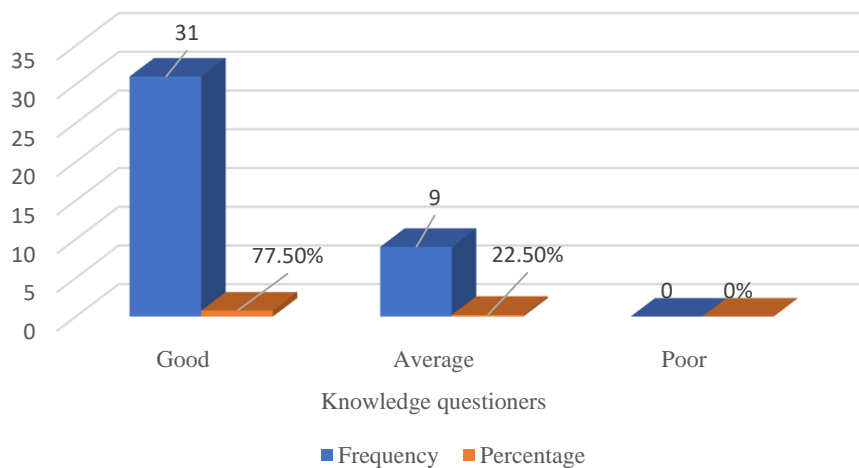


Through the tables 2 and 3 and the figure 2, we noticed that there was an excellent knowledge of the willingness to delegate authority among the internship students (75%). However, there is a lack of knowledge of delegation skills as shown in questions 5, 10, 14, 16, and 19. Whereas, 15 students out of 40 felt that they had a sense of abandonment of authority or loss of respect because of delegation, even though delegation does not detract from respect. We also note that a quarter of students (25%) believed that they do not have sufficient skills to face the negative reactions of subordinates when delegating tasks. A quarter of students also keep good work for themselves and do not delegate it. Although one of the delegation skills is not to be disturbed when the delegated work is not done to the fullest, and to deal with the problem calmly to solve it, we found that (5.87%) get annoyed when they give clear directions, but the work is not completed properly. In the tenth question, we find that (30%) of the participants frequently find themselves doing tasks.

Table 4: Overall Knowledge level of the internship students on preparedness towards delegation of authority N=40

S.no	Scale	Level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
1	Knowledge questioners	Good	31	77.5%
		Average	9	22.5%
		Poor	0	0%

Figure 3: Over All Knowledge score



The above table 4 and figure 3 clearly states most internship students (77.5%) have good knowledge of delegation of authority



Table 5: Association between the demographic variables of the subjects with the total knowledge score of preparedness towards delegation of authority N=40

S.No	Demographic variables	Scale	Chi-square	df	Significance
1	Age	Knowledge questioner	31.850	2	0.00
2	Marital status	Knowledge questioner	35.450	2	0.00
3	Department of interest of work	Knowledge questioner	2.000	3	0.572
4	Work shift	Knowledge questioner	10.500	9	0.312

The above table 5 explains the association between the demographic variables in the study participants and the knowledge questioner, in this it showed there is no significant association between the demographic variables such as the department of interest to work and work shift with the knowledge of internship students regarding delegation of authority.

DISCUSSION

This study assessed the knowledge level of delegating authority among internship nursing students at Northern Border University. The results of this study revealed that most of the study participants have good overall knowledge regarding delegation of authority but still, there were significant gaps in some areas of delegation skills.

The highest level of knowledge in this study was 75% reported that nursing internship students have a strong theoretical understanding of delegation of authority. However, the research findings of Smith et.al (2022) revealed that internship students find difficulties while applying their knowledge to practice in certain areas they find obstacles towards subordinate's negative comments and maintaining confidence in the delegation.

According to Carin Magnusson (2017), a large number of health care assistants in the UK felt role confusion due to lack of guidance in the work area, and the nursing assistants were very often frustrated due to haphazard instructions and delegation by novice nurses.

About 37.5% of internship students have concerns about losing respect while delegating tasks and about 30% of the participants found themselves frequently doing tasks assigned to them. Perhaps one of the most difficult responsibilities that falls on the shoulders of the registered nurse is



effective delegation. Registered nurses are required to understand what patients and families need and then involve the appropriate caregivers in the plan of care to achieve the desired patient outcomes while maximizing the resources available on behalf of the patient. Therefore, the registered nurse must know the skills of the caregivers and the individual differences for each of them, and choose the appropriate nurse to perform the task in the least time with the highest efficiency.

There is a gap between theory and practice about 55% of the internship students reported that there is no time saving through delegation which indicates that they need a significant training program. Simulation-based interventions reported by Hasson et al (2022). There is a significant association between the level of knowledge and the age of the internship students regarding the delegation of authority as well as there is a significant association between the level of knowledge and marital status of the internship students

This study revealed that there is a gap between theory and practice in clinical learning, so it's mandatory to have more studies to provide more depth and useful information for nursing education to fill the gaps in the learning process. (Evelyn2024)

Conducting training programs and workshops periodically for head nurses about delegation to improve their managerial skills and quality of nursing care led to improvement in nurses' knowledge, attitude, and performance regarding delegation at immediate post-follow-up program phases compared to the preprogram phase. Abdallah et al (2022)

CONCLUSION

The finding of the study on delegation of authority among internship nursing students at Northern Border University clearly shows the internship students have sound knowledge of delegation of authority but they were facing challenges while applying to practice such as delegation principles. Interpersonal dynamics and managing task-related stress. According to Helen Clarke (2021) Delegation of authority is not an isolation of basic skills. Besides it is clearly seen that its misconstrued concepts that a new RN nurse impromptu for it, Hence a preregistration nursing education integrates the development of this cardinal skill.

Various teaching methods are needed to involve nursing students in the implementation of knowledge and skills in delegating authority. Nursing students need the possibility to develop



experience in decision making and risk-free environment. The instructional design and evaluation of an innovative role play activity help the senior nursing students in the delegation of authority to their coworkers.(Susan A Seibert 2021)

In comparison with the international studies, these findings emphasize that there was a significant gap between knowledge and practice. To acknowledge the gaps the nursing curriculum should focus on hands-on practice in delegation through simulation training to help the internship students to improve their confidence level in their professional practice. Hadi Zulhiqman et al (2025) Highlights the significance of student nurses understanding the importance of delegation skill before entering in clinicals. But, by conducting workshops and through different evaluation tools helps to train these skills. However it takes more time and resources to address the nursing students learning needs. The nursing school should conduct workshops as well as provide feedback to support learning on conflict resolution and a mentorship program these can be an effective model that helps the nursing internship students in the delegation of authority.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors express their sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Nursing internship students of the Northern Border University for their consent and cooperation in this research.

REFERENCE

Abdallh, H. S., Mohammed, N., & Hasanin, A.G. (2022). Delegation training program for head nurses and its effect on their nurses competence. *Journal of Bursing Science- Benha University*, 3(10), 1 -10. <https://doi.org/10.21608/jnsbu.2022.212127>

Abdul Rahim, H. Z., Sharbini, S. H., Ali, M., Hashim, S. H., & Abdul-Mumin, K. H. (2025). Leadership and management skills for student nurses: A scoping review. *BMC Nursing*, 24, Article 111. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-024-11054-4>

Crevacore, C., Jacob, E., Coventry, L. L., & Duffield, C. (2022). Integrative review: Factors impacting effective delegation practices by registered nurses to assistants in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15430>

Clarke, H. (2021). How pre-registration nursing students acquire delegation skills: A systematic literature review. *Nurse Education Today*, 106, 105096. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2021.105096>

Hasso, F., McKenna H.P., & Keeney,S. (2022). Delegating and supervising unregistered professionals. *The student nurse Nurse Education Today*, 33(3), 229-235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2012.02.008>



Kaemested, B., & Bragadottir, H. (2012). Delegation of registered nurses revisited. Attitudes towards delegation and preparedness to delegate effectively. *Vard I Norden*, 32(2), 10-15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/010740831203200203>

Lee, H., Kim, S. (2023). Barriers to effective delegation among nursing students. A qualitative study. *Nurse Education Today*, 123, 105601. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2023.105601>

Magnusson, C. (2017). An analysis of delegation styles among newly qualified nurses. *Nursing Standard*, 31 (25), 46-53. <https://doi.org/10.7748/ns.2017.e9780>

Moradi, T., Rezaei, M., & Masoudi Alavi, N. (2024). Delegating care as a double-edged sword for quality of nursing care: A qualitative study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 24, Article 592. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-024-11054-4>

Nursing Center (2017). Nursing Students and Delegation. *Nursing Center*. Retrieved from https://www.nursingcenter.com/journalarticle?Article_ID=4087621&Journal_ID=417221&Issue_ID=4087617

School of Nursing and Professional Practice, University of Derby. (2021). How pre-registration nursing students acquire delegation skills. A systematic literature review. *Nurse Education Today*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2021.105096>

Seibert, S.A. (2021). Learning delegation through role-play: A problem-based learning activity for nursing students. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 42(6), E143-E144. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NEP.0000000000000692>

Smith, D., & Taylor, R (2022). Confidence in delegation among nursing students and preceptors. A mixed-methods study. *International journal of Nursing Studies*, 129, 104209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2022.104209>

Tambunan, E. H. (2024). Theory-practice gap during clinical learning: A descriptive qualitative study of nursing students' experiences and perceptions. *Journal of Caring Sciences*, 13(2), 74–81. <https://doi.org/10.34172/jcs.33251>

Yoon, J., et al. (2016). Confidence in delegation and leadership of registered nurses in long term care hospitals. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 24(5). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.12372>