

The Whole Picture of Female Nurse Faculty Leaders: A Systematic Review of Qualitative Studies

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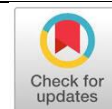
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Abstract

Background: Gender stereotypes influence women and men who work as nurses. In an education setting, the dominance of female nurses has been challenging, given their respective roles in management and leadership, both professionally and personally.

Objective: To explore the experience and synthesize available literature on female nurse leaders in academic settings.

Methods: A systematic review of qualitative studies from academic databases, such as ProQuest, PubMed, CINAHL, and MEDLINE, was conducted, starting from 1 January 1990 to 31 December 2021. The criteria included being freely accessible, complete in terms of content, authored, published in the English language, and a combination of keywords including nurse, nursing, faculty, dean, head, and director were applied. The review was reported following the PRISMA format. The studies included were assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Program tool (CASP) 2017.

Results: The screening process resulted in the selection of fourteen (14) studies from the USA, Canada, UK, and Australia that used a range of qualitative methodologies, including descriptive explorative, phenomenology, grounded theory, feminist research, case studies, and a number of data collection techniques, including open-surveys, interviews, field notes, campus observations, document analysis, and analytic memos. Thematic analyses were applied and yielded six main themes: dealing with power imbalance and gender discrimination, addressing problems related to people, disruption in fulfilling leadership roles, leadership personalities, people-oriented leadership quality, and change-oriented leadership quality.

Conclusion: Female faculty leaders in nursing reported various personal and professional challenges. The existing literature scarcely captured the gender-specific challenges encountered, including gender stereotyping and the struggle to balance their personal and professional life. Therefore, nurses must provide the following leaders opportunities to enhance nursing education, support the process of leadership regeneration, and develop the profession.

Keywords: female leader; leadership; nursing education; nursing management; qualitative

INTRODUCTION

Males are significantly underrepresented in the nursing profession globally, both in the educational and clinical settings. It may be connected to the perception that nursing is generally female-dominated (Hughes, 2019). However, being a female nurse faculty leader in higher nursing education in an academic context is another

problem that may be related to the lack of appreciation for women's jobs.

Leadership in an academic setting was defined as the capability to build a scholar's society, accomplish target goals through empowerment, and improve internal and external partnerships (Hakvoort et al., 2022). Additionally, a leader in an

academic setting is expected to develop the requisite leadership abilities, define a career trajectory, create a career roadmap, and develop the necessary leadership skills (Giddens & Morton, 2018). The complexity of the leadership position in academics demonstrated the requirement for both positional and personal qualities that can affect leadership goals.

Previous studies have identified how people's traits affect how higher education is administered. The qualities include commitment, courage, vision, credibility, adaptability, persistence, innovation, communicativeness, and integrity (Crawford et al., 2019; Hannon, 2014). Based on these characteristics, it can be concluded that an academic leader should be someone with abilities to encourage constituents to collaborate for the internal objectives of academia or even global.

To the best of our knowledge, no published review explored female nurse faculty experience as a leader in the last decade. Therefore, there is a gap in nursing knowledge about nurse faculty leaders whom females commonly lead. To further uncover the female nurse faculty leader in the academic setting, this review was compiled from English-published papers that focused on the interactions of individuals who are now serving as head of a nursing faculty or have recently done so.

METHOD

Research Design

The study is a qualitative systematic review with results reported based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 protocol. This review specifically examined qualitative studies that met the criteria of being freely accessible, complete in terms of content, authored, and published in English. Studies published between 1 January 1990 and 31 December 2021 were retrieved from ProQuest, PubMed, CINAHL, and MEDLINE. The search used a combination of keywords, including "nurse," "nursing," "faculty," "dean," "head," and "director."

Phenomenon and Outcomes of Interest

The phenomenon of interest was women's experiences in leadership roles within nursing

faculties, encompassing their professional and personal aspects. The study aims to include individuals holding various titles such as dean, executive dean, director, chairperson, or head of school as potential participants. Additionally, even when certain articles did not explicitly mention the gender characteristics of the participants, they were still considered in line with the study's objectives.

Assessment of Methodological Quality

Papers selected for retrieval were assessed by two independent reviewers for methodological quality using the CASP Qualitative Checklist (CASP, 2017). This checklist consists of 10 questions concerning the study aim, appropriate qualitative design, recruitment strategy, data collection, the relationship between the researcher and participants, ethical issues, data analysis, clear statement of findings, and the value of the research. The complete checklist and the results of the quality assessment were conducted, discussed, and agreed upon by all authors.

Data Extraction and Analysis

The data extraction process commenced with an initial review of diverse contexts, followed by the compilation of chosen papers. This phase aimed to create a comprehensive overview and synthesize the thematic discoveries. The analysis was conducted independently by three reviewers. All authors agreed upon the final version of the manuscript.

RESULT

Study Inclusion

The initial search generated 459 studies from the selected databases with no addition from additional records; 234 studies remained after the duplicates were removed. The title and abstract screening excluded 127 articles, leaving 107 to be screened in full-text. As many as 93 articles were removed due to the following reasons: duplicates (n = 12), not complete finding (n = 8), nurse clinical leaders' experience (n = 4), integrative review (n = 1), not relevant participants (n = 45), quantitative study (n = 7), mix methods (n = 7) and review articles (n = 12). The final studies included 14 articles. The Prisma-flow diagram is depicted in Figure 1.

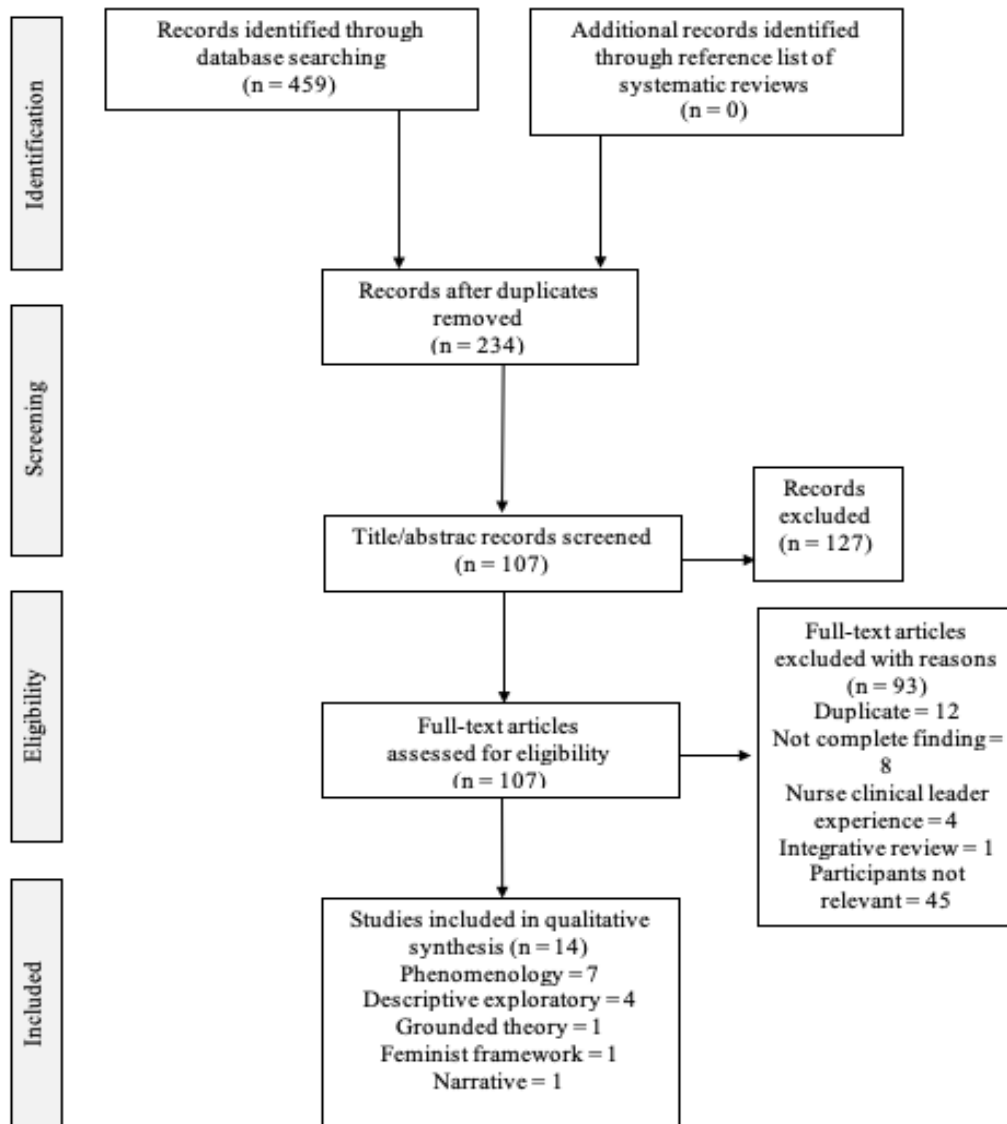


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram 2020 of search and selection process

Description of Included Studies

Out of the 14 studies included in this systematic review, 12 were conducted in the USA (Bormann, 2018; Clark & Springer, 2010; Falk, 2014; Horton-Deutsch et al., 2014; Horton-Deutsch et al., 2010; Mintz-Binder & Lindley, 2014; Pardue et al., 2018; Patterson & Krouse, 2015; Pearsall et al., 2014; Peters & King, 2017; Stiles et al., 2011; Young et al., 2011), one in the UK (Ross et al., 2013) and one in three different countries; Canada, UK, and Australia (Wilkes et al., 2015). Most studies discussed the leadership experience of the nurse faculty leaders in general contexts. Four studies discussed perceptions on the nurse faculty leader turnover, handling academic incivility (Clark & Springer, 2010;

Peters & King, 2017), and extending the contract of aging nurse faculty members (Falk, 2014).

The number of participants for each study ranged from 6 to 184. Three studies exclusively involved women as the participants (Bormann, 2018; Falk, 2014; Peters & King, 2017), two studies involved men and women but the latter were more dominant (Patterson & Krouse, 2015; Wilkes et al., 2015), while the remaining nine studies did not disclose the gender proportion (Clark & Springer, 2010; Horton-Deutsch et al., 2014; Horton-Deutsch et al., 2010; Mintz-Binder & Lindley, 2014; Pardue et al., 2018; Pearsall et al., 2014; Ross et al., 2013; Stiles et al., 2011; Young et al., 2011). Despite including articles

with male participants, this review focused solely on female nurse faculty leaders.

Diverse qualitative methodologies were applied; phenomenology (n = 7) (Horton-Deutsch et al., 2014; Horton-Deutsch et al., 2010; Pardue et al., 2018; Pearsall et al., 2014; Peters & King, 2017; Stiles et al., 2011; Young et al., 2011), descriptive-exploratory (n = 4) (Clark & Springer, 2010; Mintz-Binder & Lindley, 2014; Patterson & Krouse, 2015; Ross et al., 2013), grounded theory (n = 1) (Falk, 2014), feminist research (n = 1) (Bormann, 2018), and narrative qualitative (n = 1) (Wilkes et al., 2015). All phenomenology studies (n = 7) used hermeneutic analysis (Horton-Deutsch et al., 2014;

Horton-Deutsch et al., 2010; Pardue et al., 2018; Pearsall et al., 2014; Peters & King, 2017; Stiles et al., 2011; Young et al., 2011), while the others used various analysis such as content analysis (n = 2) (Clark & Springer, 2010; Wilkes et al., 2015), constant comparative analysis (n = 1, framework analysis (n = 1) (Ross et al., 2013), inductive iterative analysis (n = 1) (Patterson & Krouse, 2015), narrative analysis (n = 1) (Bormann, 2018), and thematic analysis (n = 1) (Mintz-Binder & Lindley, 2014). Varieties of methods were adopted for data collection, such as open surveys, interviews, field notes, campus observations, document analysis, and analytic memos (Table 2).

Table 2 Data extraction and analysis

Author-Year	Methods, participants, and setting	Findings	
		Themes	Sub-themes
Bormann (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feminist theoretical framework with Job Characteristics Theory model - In-depth interviews - 6 (all female) - USA 	(1) The workload and schedule of the nursing directors	(1.1) Relationships (1.2) Workload (1.3) Authority and autonomy (1.4) Contracts and incentives (1.5) Interrelating factors (1.6) Leadership and readiness
		(2) Heavy responsibilities as spouses, parents, and caregivers	(2.1) Differences in supervisor roles based on genders (2.2) Balancing life between work and family
		(3) Giving meaning to the job	(3.1) Variety of skills (3.2) Identity of task (3.3) Significance of task
		(4) Autonomy and the experienced responsibility	(4.1) Lack of authority
		(5) Knowledge of the job outcomes	(5.1) Feedback and information about the job outcomes (5.2) Social dimensions of the job outcomes
Clark & Springer (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descriptive-exploratory - Open-survey question - Content analysis - 126* - USA 	(1) Perceived stressors from students	Two most each: (1.1) Juggling multiple roles and meeting complex demands (1.2) Financial pressures
		(2) Uncivil behaviors displayed by students	(2.1) In-class disruptions (various) (2.2) Aggressive, intimidating, bullying behavior
		(3) Perceived faculty stressors	(3.1) Multiple work demands (various)

Author-Year	Methods, participants, and setting	Findings	
		Themes	Sub-themes
			(3.2) Problematic students
		(4) Uncivil behaviors displayed by faculty	(4.1) Overt rude and disruptive behaviors (various) (4.2) Avoidant, isolative, and exclusionary behaviors (various)
		(5) Role of nurse leaders	(5.1) Establish respectful culture and environment (various) (5.2) Policy development and implementation
Falk (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grounded theory - Audiotaped, face-to-face, and interviews by phone - Constant comparative analysis - 9 (all female) - USA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Appreciating experienced nurse faculty (2) Persevering through environmental difficulties (3) Acknowledging conflicting stakeholder interests (4) Readjusting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1.1) Valuing experienced nurse faculty (2.1) Internal challenges (2.2) External challenges (2.3) Tensions (2.4) Pressure (2.5) Continual transformation (3.1) Grasping conflicting stakeholder interests (3.2) Relating failure to stakeholder incongruence (4.1) New Approach to extend the academic work life of experienced nurse faculty
Horton-Deutsch et al. (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretative phenomenology - Interviews - Hermeneutic analysis - 23* - USA 	Facing challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Reflecting; (2) Persevering; (3) Learning new approaches to connect with colleagues
Horton-Deutsch et al. (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretative phenomenology - Interviews - Hermeneutic analysis - 21* - USA 	Engaging in proper actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Sense of responsibilities; (2) Sense of vision; (3) Authentic to one's essential self and adhering to personal principles
Mintz-Binder & Lindley (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descriptive-exploratory - Qualitative thematic analysis - Survey open-ended question - 184* - USA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Faculty issues (2) Workload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1.1) Staffing inexperience (1.2) lack of applicants (1.3) Motivation (1.4) Conflict (1.5) Performance (1.6) Work ethic (2.1) Struggling to manage teaching responsibilities alongside administrative tasks

Author- Year	Methods, participants, and setting	Findings	
		Themes	Sub-themes
		(3) Insufficient resources	(3.1) Require assistance with administrative tasks (3.2) Require coordinators for clinical matters (3.3) Insufficient financial resources
		(4) Student issues	(4.1) Student behaviors (4.2) Failures and grievances (4.3) Meddling parents
		(5) Supervisory hierarchy	(5.1) Insufficient understanding (5.2) Lack of power (5.3) Issues with systems
		(6) Curriculum	(6.1) The necessity for enhancements (6.2) Keeping up-to-date (6.3) Producing a quality outcome
Pardue et al. (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretative phenomenology - In-depth hermeneutic analysis and focus group narratives - 21* - USA 	Being willing to fail	(1) Cultivating an environment that encourages experimentation; (2) Putting in dedicated effort for achieving success; (3) Gaining insights from setbacks
Patterson & Krouse (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative description - Interviews - Analysis by inductive - 15 (13 female) - USA 	(1) Articulate and promote vision	(1.1) Envision potential scenarios for nursing education (1.2) Challenge the existing norms and beliefs by embracing risks (1.3) Strategize and plan thoughtfully (1.4) Propose and push forward creative concepts (1.5) Establish an environment for transformation
		(2) Function as a steward for the organization	(2.1) Observe and collect data from broad fields for strategic planning (2.2) Establish mechanisms for decision-making based on data analysis (2.3) Address tough and intricate choices (2.4) Persuade stakeholders to back and promote progress in

Author- Year	Methods, participants, and setting	Findings	
		Themes	Sub-themes
			nursing education (2.5) Engage in succession
		(3) Embrace professional values	(3.1) Working based on ethical principles (3.2) Being accountable to self and others (3.3) Promoting a safe and secure environment (3.4) Being credible faculty
		(4) Develop and nurture relationships	(4.1) Communicate respectfully and compassionately (4.2) Serve as a role model (4.3) Mentor students and colleagues (4.4) Create a mutual environment with others (4.5) Advocate for others (4.6) Acknowledge and support innovation
Pearsall et al. (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretative phenomenology - In-depth interview and focus group discussion - Hermeneutic analysis - 14* - USA 	Doing homework, internal activity conducted by individuals outside their working hours	(1) Carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages; (2) Mastering the context; (3) Building relationships
Peters & King (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretative phenomenology - In-depth interviews - Heideggerian hermeneutic analysis - 11 (all female) - USA 	(1) Power imbalance (2) Deep-rooted culture (3) Lack of preparation and support (4) Instigator avoidance/exit when confronted	(1.1) Blindsided (1.2) Navigating cautiously (2.1) Communication (2.2) Excused behavior by previous academic nurse administrators (2.3) Recruiting an administrator to address the issue (3.1) The notion that addressing incivility needs time (4.1) Consumes workplace time/time-consuming endeavor
Ross et al. (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Descriptive-exploratory 	(1) The leadership context	(1.1) Understanding and maneuvering through diverse professional, employer, and university cultures and politics

Author- Year	Methods, participants, and setting	Findings	
		Themes	Sub-themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structured open-ended telephone interviews - Framework analysis - 10* - UK 	<p>(2) The leadership skills necessary for an administrative position</p> <hr/> <p>(3) Leadership skills</p>	<p>(2.1) Advocating and voicing opinions;</p> <p>(2.2) Interpersonal abilities and adaptability;</p> <p>(2.3) Innovating and exploring uncharted territories</p> <hr/> <p>(3.1) Legitimacy of nursing as a practice discipline in universities</p>
Stiles et al. (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretative phenomenology - Tape-recorded telephone interviews - Hermeneutic analysis - 24* - USA 	Advancing educational reform	<p>(1) Engaging with peers;</p> <p>(2) Grappling with being a role model and maintaining authenticity before service; and</p> <p>(3) Establishing a transformative environment</p>
Wilkes et al. (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative-Based Qualitative - Semi-Structured Interviews - Content analysis 	<p>(1) Personal attributes included</p> <hr/> <p>(2) Positional attributes included</p>	<p>(1.1) Passion</p> <p>(1.2) Patience</p> <p>(1.3) Courage</p> <p>(1.4) Facilitating</p> <p>(1.5) Sharing</p> <p>(1.6) Being supportive</p> <hr/> <p>(2.1) Communication</p> <p>(2.2) Faculty development</p> <p>(2.3) Role modelling</p> <p>(2.4) Good management</p> <p>(2.5) Promoting nursing</p>
Young et al. (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretive phenomenology - Tape-recorded telephone interviews - Hermeneutic analysis 	<p>(1) Being thrust into leadership</p> <hr/> <p>(2) Taking risks</p> <hr/> <p>(3) Facing challenges</p>	<p>(1.1) Attempting to succeed at something new</p> <p>(1.2) Being driven by one's unique way of being</p> <hr/> <p>(2.1) Trying something new with students</p> <p>(2.2) Speaking up</p> <hr/> <p>(3.1) Building consensus</p>

* No specific gender information was added

Thematic findings

Results of the thematic synthesis (figure 2) were condensed into six themes: dealing with power imbalance and gender discrimination; addressing problems related to people; disruption in fulfilling

leadership roles; leadership personalities; people-oriented leadership quality; and task- and change-oriented leadership quality.

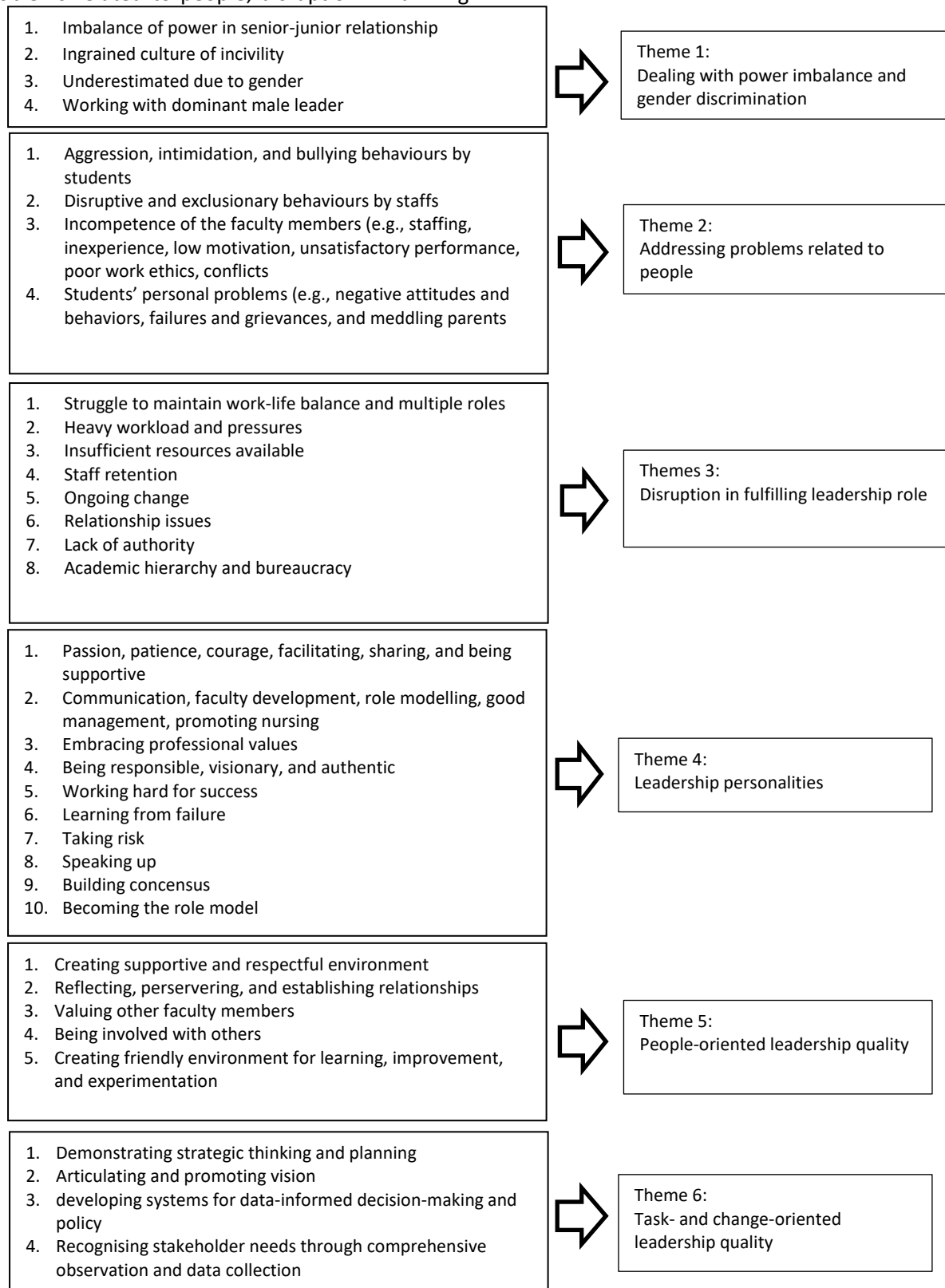


Figure 2. Thematic Findings

Thematic findings

Theme 1: Dealing with power imbalance and gender discrimination

There were some challenges caused by the deep-rooted culture in the workplace. The first was an imbalance of power; it can be found in senior-junior relationships. The junior faculty leaders expressed that they were ignored by their senior faculty members and felt obliged to be more careful in saying or doing something to avoid conflict (Peters & King, 2017). The other challenge was the ingrained culture of academic incivility; the uncivil behaviors, which are person-related challenges, can be deeply ingrained in the workplace if tolerated for a long time (Peters & King, 2017). Further, some female participants expressed that they were often underestimated due to their gender, particularly while working with male leaders who displayed dominant behavior or a superiority complex (Bormann, 2018).

Theme 2: Addressing problems related to people

Two studies showed that nurse faculty leaders often addressed problems related to people, particularly faculty members, and students. The most prominent problem is academic incivility (e.g., aggression, intimidation, and bullying behaviors displayed by the students and disruptive and exclusionary behaviors displayed by the faculties)(Clark & Springer, 2010). Besides, the challenges can also be related to incompetence and personal problems of the faculty members (e.g., staffing inexperience, low motivation, unsatisfactory performance, poor work ethics, and conflicts) and students (e.g., negative attitudes and behaviors, failures and grievances, and meddling parents) (Mintz-Binder & Lindley, 2014).

Theme 3: Disruption in fulfilling leadership role

Three studies indicated the disruption in fulfilling the role of a nurse faculty leader, either personally or professionally. An example of a personal barrier was a family problem; this barrier was expressed by some female nurse faculty leaders who often struggled to achieve work and family life balance. They expressed their stress in maintaining between professional life and their roles as wives, mothers, and sometimes daughters when they have to look after their aging parents (Bormann, 2018). Meanwhile, the examples of professional barriers

were heavy workload and pressures (which can be associated with personal barriers as well), insufficient resources available, staff retention, ongoing change, relationship issues, the lack of authority, and academic hierarchy and bureaucracy (Bormann, 2018; Falk, 2014; Mintz-Binder & Lindley, 2014).

Theme 4: Leadership personalities

Six studies found the leadership personalities of a nurse faculty leader, one of which specifically explored the personal and positional attributes. The personal qualities include passion, patience, courage, facilitation, sharing, and supportiveness. Additionally, it highlighted positional traits such as effective communication, faculty development, role modeling, proficient management, and the promotion of nursing (Wilkes et al., 2015). The other individual leadership qualities are embracing professional values such as being accountable, credible, and ethical (Horton-Deutsch et al., 2014; Patterson & Krouse, 2015); being responsible, visionary, and authentic (Horton-Deutsch et al., 2014); working hard for success (Pardue et al., 2018); learning from failure (Pardue et al., 2018); taking a risk; speaking up; building consensus (Young et al., 2011); and becoming the role model (Stiles et al., 2011).

Theme 5: People-oriented leadership quality

The studies generated people-oriented leadership qualities, namely creating a supportive and respectful environment for people from different cultures and backgrounds (Clark & Springer, 2010; Ross et al., 2013); reflecting, persevering, and establishing relationships (Horton-Deutsch et al., 2010; Patterson & Krouse, 2015; Pearsall et al., 2014); valuing other faculty members (Falk, 2014); being involved with others (Stiles et al., 2011); as well as creating a friendly environment for learning, improvement, and experimentation (Falk, 2014; Pardue et al., 2018; Stiles et al., 2011).

Theme 6: Task and change-oriented leadership quality

Besides the people-oriented leadership qualities, the studies also generated change-oriented qualities, namely demonstrating strategic thinking and planning (Patterson & Krouse, 2015; Pearsall et al., 2014); articulating and promoting vision

(Patterson & Krouse, 2015); developing systems for data-informed decision-making and policy (Clark & Springer, 2010); recognizing stakeholder needs through comprehensive observation and data collection (Falk, 2014; Patterson & Krouse, 2015).

DISCUSSION

The current study revealed that female participants encountered several challenges as nurse faculty leaders. The challenges were caused by uncivil colleagues and students, personal and professional barriers in carrying out their leadership role, or unsupportive cultures of the working environment. Some challenges were more likely to be experienced by the female participants, namely gender role issues and work-life balance. These issues were found in general academic settings across the globe, including developed, e.g., Australia (Redmond et al., 2017), Canada (Penney et al., 2015), Iceland (Rafnsdóttir & Heijstra, 2013), New Zealand (Redmond et al., 2017), and USA (Reinert, 2016), and developing countries, e.g., Indonesia (Arquisola, 2020), Iran (Mohajeri & Mousavi, 2017), and Vietnam (Nguyen, 2013).

Gender stereotyping has been part of the workplace culture for a long time. It is one of three so-called “triple binds” issues that constrain female academics from taking a leadership position on campus (Arquisola, 2020). The stereotypes place women as unworthy leaders than men. They are often misleadingly perceived as too emotional, so they cannot make a rational decision. The other two issues are imbalance of power related to social positions and status and organizational capital (Arquisola, 2020). These issues are associated with the women’s struggle to balance their personal and professional lives.

Female participants were more likely to stick with domestic and caring works than their male counterparts. The findings clearly depicted that female nurse faculty leaders encountered “extra” challenges in their personal and professional lives; in some cases, it could prevent them from to leave their leadership positions. The female leaders’ family obligations and multiple domestic roles (e.g., wife, mother, and daughter) can increase their workload and potentially affect their professional performance. It significantly reduced their time to “doing their homework”, an internal activity conducted by individuals outside their working

hours to reflect and evaluate their leadership performance (Pearsall et al., 2014). It also indicates that women were still systematically devalued outside their workplace (DeMarco et al., 2004).

In contrast, men were more likely to get flexible time to do their projects, build their network, and live their professional lives. The imbalance of time spent at work between men and women reproduces power and gender relations in academic institutions (Rafnsdóttir & Heijstra, 2013). This situation could be a barrier for women to advance their leadership careers. The problem may be less complex for female leaders who lead an organization where women are the majority. In nursing education institutions, for instance, female candidates have a great chance to be elected as the competition with the male candidates is less stringent. However, it does not mean they do not experience gender stereotyping from their colleagues.

This review is expected to provide a unique perspective of female faculty leaders’ experiences in the women-majority profession. However, only one study (i.e., feminist research) captured the gender-specific challenges discussed above (Bormann, 2018). The feminist perspective strongly believes that voice representation is socially constructed. Accordingly, involving female participants does not guarantee that women’s voices were sufficiently represented, as it depends on what value was brought to the analysis. Therefore, deliberate action to represent women’s voices is needed to explore their genuine experiences (Mitchell, 2017). This can explain why this feminist study was able to deeply scrutinize the experiences of the former nursing college deans and directors (Bormann, 2018). The study explicitly exposed the struggles of these female leaders in carrying out their roles as wife, mother, and daughter; the theme that was missing in the other studies.

Despite facing numerous challenges, many female nurse faculty members still felt determined to take the leadership role. They choose to pursue the leadership career path as it is challenging, unique, and different (Kendall, 2014). Moreover, they felt that their gender did not negatively affect their career progression. It has been studied (Madsen, 2012) that women’s involvement in leadership, especially if succeed, they can inspire other women to take the same responsibility. This inspiration

might then change the perspective about women leadership.

The systematic review has certain limitations to acknowledge. It may not fully capture the personal viewpoints of participants, and as a result, no findings from Asia, Africa, and South America met the eligibility criteria for inclusion in this review. While we aimed to encompass as many articles as possible, there were some unnoticed articles. Consequently, the study cannot be broadly generalized to encompass the experiences of nurse faculty leaders worldwide. Nevertheless, through the synthesis of findings, we were able to capture some of their experiences. Additionally, there is a potential bias in favor of English language publications since some qualifying publications may have been overlooked.

In terms of promoting gender equality, it is essential to provide future academic nurses with opportunities for growth and skill development, which are crucial for effective leadership. Strategic mentoring and interprofessional education can be valuable in nurturing and supporting the development of future nurse leaders. These initiatives can help shape leadership identity, increase awareness and understanding of diverse perspectives, and reduce misconceptions related to cultural issues. Future studies should place greater emphasis on exploring female-specific experiences, including gender roles and gender discrimination, within the predominantly female profession.

CONCLUSION

The female leadership role in higher nursing education reflects the complexity that influences the nursing profession. This study emphasized the importance of implementing strategic measures to promote the leadership development of nurse faculty leaders and to foster high-performance and supportive academic environments. Top management of higher education institutions should encourage a more friendly environment for female leadership by eradicating power imbalance and discrimination towards women faculties. Nursing is a people-centered profession, and therefore, the issue of leadership is crucial for nurses' identity and professional development, as well as for evolving and innovating nursing in

educational practice. It is then imperative that nurses create opportunities for the next leaders to continue the advancement of nursing education as well as empower the leadership in the leadership regeneration process and the profession.

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