

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

A Journey of Career Ladders for Nursing Professionalism: A Systematic Review

Carreras profesionales y probidad en enfermería: una revisión sistemática

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Abstract

Background. The career ladder is an essential process for nursing professionals, designed to enhance professionalism and improve the quality of nursing practice. Career ladders are achieved through continuing professional development (CPD) and have implications for professionalism, career advancement, job satisfaction, and patient care. **Objective.** This study aimed to identify the role and benefits of career ladders in professional development within nursing practice and careers. **Methods.** We conducted a systematic review by searching four online databases (PubMed, ScienceDirect, Scopus, and ProQuest) for English-language articles published between 2000 and 2024. The search used the keywords/MeSH terms “[career ladder]” OR “[career choice]” AND “[nursing]” AND “[professional].” **Results.** Eleven studies met the inclusion criteria and described career ladder programs related to career growth, career choice, and nursing career mapping. Six studies used a cross-sectional design, one used a cohort design, and four employed qualitative designs. **Conclusion.** Career ladders generally improve nursing professionalism, particularly among professionals who have completed a career ladder program. However, several studies also highlight the importance of career ladders for novice nurses in planning their careers. A key limitation of this review is its focus on nursing careers, while other factors may also influence the professionalism of nursing professionals.

Keywords: Career Ladder, Nursing, Review.

Resumen

Antecedentes. La carrera profesional es un proceso esencial para el ejercicio de la enfermería, diseñada para aumentar la competencia, contribuye a mejorar la calidad de la práctica. Los ascensos se consiguen a través del desarrollo profesional continuo (DPC) y tienen implicaciones para la calidad de la atención, la promoción profesional, la satisfacción laboral y la satisfacción del paciente. **Objetivo.** Este estudio tenía como objetivo identificar el papel y los beneficios de los escalafones profesionales en el desarrollo profesional dentro de la práctica y las carreras de enfermería. **Métodos.** Se realizó una revisión sistemática de la literatura mediante la búsqueda en cuatro bases de datos en línea (PubMed, ScienceDirect, Scopus y ProQuest) de artículos en inglés publicados entre 2000 y 2024. La búsqueda utilizó las palabras clave/términos MeSH “[career ladder, carrera profesional ascendente]” OR “[career choice, elección vocacional]” AND “[nursing, enfermería]” AND “[professional, profesional]”. **Resultados.** Once estudios cumplieron los criterios de inclusión puesto que describían programas de escalafón para enfermería relacionados con el ascenso profesional, la elección de carrera y su mapa profesional. Seis estudios utilizaron un diseño transversal, uno utilizó un diseño de cohortes y cuatro emplearon diseños cualitativos. **Conclusiones.** En general, los ascensos profesionales mejoran la profesionalidad en la profesión de enfermera, sobre todo entre los profesionales que han completado un programa de ascenso. Sin embargo, varios estudios también destacan la importancia de los escalafones profesionales para enfermeras principiantes a la hora de planificar sus carreras. Una limitación clave de esta revisión es que se centra en las carreras de enfermería, mientras que otros factores también pueden influir en la competitividad de los profesionales de enfermería.

Palabras clave: Escalafón profesional, Enfermería, Revisión.



Background

Health organizations in the era of technological development now face major challenges in ensuring that services remain high quality and affordable¹. They must focus on patient needs, maintain quality and organized management, and prepare human resources (HR) who can respond rapidly to changes (Haenggli & Hirschi, 2020; Wang et al., 2018). Increasing public demand and expectations for health services, without simultaneous improvements in human resource and financial performance, threatens the sustainability of the global health service system².³ Consequently, there is no alternative but to invest in human resource development.

Improving the quality of health human resources, including the nursing profession, must begin with career ladder implementation through the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) process⁴.⁵ Skilled and professional health resources enhance the quality of patient services and increase patient safety⁶. The career ladder is defined as a systematic human resource management method using strategic techniques to improve patient care quality, gain recognition, awards, and competencies. This approach is commonly termed the professional career ladder².³

The career ladder begins when a nursing professional enters the workforce as a new practitioner⁷. This phase is challenging because it marks the transition from student to employee, and career progression during this period is expected to positively impact the quality of care⁸. In this study, new nursing professionals are defined as those with less than one year of work experience. This period is considered critical in shaping a nursing professional's identity and career orientation⁹.

This study was conducted to identify the benefits of career ladder programs implemented through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities on the professionalism and quality of nursing practice—particularly in Indonesia—to

ensure the sustainability of career ladders for nursing professionals.

Method

This review followed the framework outlined by¹⁰, which involves several stages: identifying research questions, selecting relevant studies, sorting sources of evidence, compiling findings, and finally mapping the results to draw conclusions and recommendations. The literature review is reported in accordance with the PRISMA Extension checklist developed by Tricco and Lillie¹¹.

Stage 1: Identifying Research Questions

The research question framework was structured using the Population, Intervention, and Outcome (PIO) model, which forms the foundation of evidence-based practice¹². The effectiveness of PIO in producing relevant search results has been demonstrated in various studies. For example, Kloda (2020) reported that using the PIO framework yields a higher percentage of relevant search outcomes¹³.

In this study, the researchers formulated a PIO framework to guide the identification of articles relevant to the review. Eligible studies included cross-sectional designs, ethnographic studies, and cohort studies. The search was limited to studies published up to 2024 and included samples of nursing professionals who were newly employed in hospitals or working in other healthcare services such as Community Health Centers, as well as nursing professionals who had progressed through the career ladder. Only studies with outcomes related to improving professionalism and the quality of nursing professionals' work were included.

Stage 2: Search Strategy and Data Sources

The initial search strategy involved using four databases: PubMed, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, and Scopus. Articles were identified by screening titles and abstracts using the following keywords: "New

Nursing Professionals OR Clinical Nursing Professionals” AND “Career Ladder OR Career Growth OR Career Choice” AND “Professionalism OR Professional.” This search strategy was designed to capture all relevant studies. Only articles available in English or Spanish, open access, and full-text format were included.

Stage 3: Selecting Sources of Evidence

Four reviewers (HA, RRTSH, EN, and TAP) independently screened the titles and abstracts of all identified articles. Articles that appeared to meet the inclusion criteria were then reviewed in full text to ensure compliance with the predefined eligibility criteria.

Stage 4: Compiling, Summarizing, and Reporting Data

Information was collected, including the name of the article author, date/year of research, country where the research was conducted, methods used, research results, and research limitations/recommendations. A summary of the search results can be seen in the table presented. The results are then summarized and reported in descriptive form.

Results

Study Selection

Figure 1 shows the PRISMA diagram. In the initial process, 91,352 articles were found from 4 databases. After selection based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 11 articles were included and assessed in table 1.

Benefits and Role of Career Ladders in Enhancing the Professionalism of Nursing Professionals

Ahn and Choi’s study¹⁴ compared the perceptions of nursing professionals who participated in a career ladder program with those who did not. The study revealed that understanding and perceived benefits—particularly related to education and training that support professionalism—differed

Table 1. Population, Intervention, Outcome (PIO), inclusion and exclusion criteria

PICO Elements	Inclusion	Exclusion
P: new nursing professionals or clinical nursing professionals	Focus on nursing professionals	Career ladder in medicine and other health sciences besides nursing
I: Career Ladder, Career Growth, Career Choice	Intervention in improving professionalism and service quality	-
O: Professionalism, nursing professional satisfaction, missed nursing care, patient safety, quality nursing practice	-	-
Language	English and Spanish	Apart from English and Spanish

*p:population, I: intervention, O:Outcome

significantly between the two groups. Career ladders proved especially valuable as an initial screening mechanism for determining clinical appointments or granting clinical authority to nursing professionals. Similarly, S. Vilendrer’s study showed that career opportunities tend to develop alongside increasing responsibilities¹⁵.

Hospitals and community health centers must meet human resource needs and be prepared to address various challenges and client demands for comprehensive health services. Afriani (2017) found a correlation between the readiness of health

organizations and the level of participation in implementing career ladders among nursing professionals¹⁶. Furthermore, the work environment itself is strongly linked to both job and career involvement¹⁷.

For new nursing professionals, career ladders are closely linked to their organizational commitment to continue providing nursing care and services to clients¹⁸. The individual characteristics of new nursing professionals are also strongly shaped by their participation in career ladder programs¹⁹.

Without a clear career ladder and defined goals, new nursing professionals are more likely to resign or seek better opportunities elsewhere²⁰.

Career ladders are highly beneficial for offering clarity and a structured career path for nursing professionals. By mapping out their career trajectories, nurses can plan and develop their skills more effectively. Those who participate in career ladder programs tend to display greater professionalism in their practice, including a stronger focus on patient safety^{21, 22}.

Figure 1: Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram.

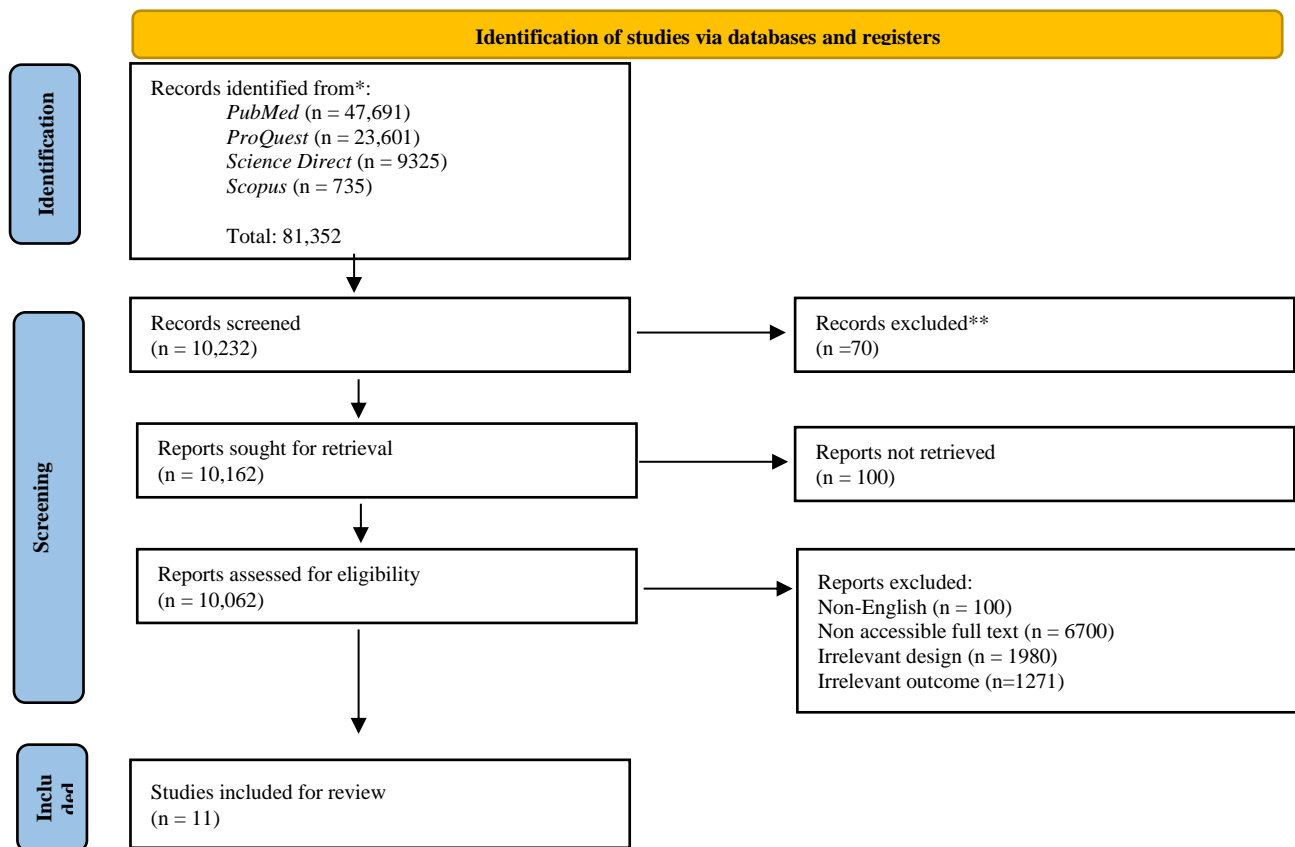


Table 1. Study characteristics

No	Databases	Authors	Article title	Journal title	Objective	Design/variables/instruments	Sample/location	Results
1	Pub Med	Ahn and Choi 14.	Nursing professionals' perceptions of career ladder systems, job satisfaction and turnover intention: A cross-sectional study.	Nursing Open	To compare the perception of nursing professionals with and without career ladders regarding satisfaction, turnover intention between small hospitals	Design: Descriptive survey Questionnaire: The Korean Perception of Career Ladder System scale developed by Park and Lee, Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire Scale (COPSOQ-K), Turnover Scale originally developed by Mobley	Population: 600 Sample: 274 Location: 2 small-medium scale hospitals in Gyeonggi Province, Korea	The mean score for general understanding of career ladders was significantly different between the implementation and non-implementation groups ($t = 7.41, p < .001$) The mean job satisfaction score was 2.6 ± 0.4 , and the mean turnover intention score was 2.5 ± 0.5 . There were no significant differences between the implementation and non-implementation groups on these variables ($p > 0.05$).
2	Science Direct	Ghanem Atalla, Sharif 23	Relationship between nursing professionals' perception of professional shared governance and their career motivation: A cross-sectional study	International journal of nursing sciences	To understand the relationship between professionalism and career motivation in Egypt	Design: Cross-sectional survey Questionnaire: Professional Nursing Governance (IPNG) version 3.0, Career Motivation Scale Analysis: SPSS Version 23 Tests: Spearman correlation, ANOVA, and Mann-Whitney	Sample: 724 nursing professionals Location: Alexandria Main University Hospital	There is a positive correlation between the level of professionalism and three career dimensions: career resilience ($r = 0.834$), career identity ($r = 0.715$), and career insight ($r = 0.464$) ($P < 0.001$).
3	PubMed	Afriani, Hariyati and Wulandari 16	Relationship Between Nursing Professionals' Readiness And Institutional Readiness In Developing Nursing Career Paths in public Health Centers	Jurnal Keperawatan Indonesia	To determine the readiness of institutions and nursing professionals in implementing a nursing career ladder at the Community Health Center.	Design: Cross-sectional Questionnaire: Adopted from the development by Weiner and Boukenooghe	Population: 93 nursing professionals from 13 community health centers Location: West Java	The results showed that institutional readiness was 64 or 71.9% of the maximum value, while nursing professional readiness was 112 or 74.5% of the maximum value. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between institutional and nursing readiness and career ladder implementation ($p < 0.001$), showing a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.521$).
4	Science Direct	Vilendrer, Amano 15	A qualitative assessment of medical assistant professional aspirations and their alignment with career ladders across three institutions	BMC Primary Care	To understand career needs and their alignment with available career opportunities.	Design: Qualitative study Data Collection: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Analysis: Using Grand theory and reported according to CORECT qualitative guidelines	Sample: 59 participants Location: California and Utah Time: August-December 2019	The study revealed three main themes: Diverse perceptions, expanding roles considering increased responsibilities, differences in perceptions among nursing professionals not fulfilled by the existing career ladder. The challenges of implementing a career ladder, including unclear progression requirements and a lack of consistency across practice environments.

No	Databases	Authors	Article title	Journal title	Objective	Design/variables / instruments	Sample/ location	Results
5	Science Direct	Kaldal, Voldbjerg 18	Newly graduated nursing professionals' commitment to the nursing profession and their workplace during their first year of employment: A focused ethnography	Journal of advanced nursing	To explore the cultural beliefs and practices that influence newly graduated nursing professionals' commitment to the profession and their workplace during their first year on the job.	Design: Ethnographic study Interview Guide: Semi-structured interview Analysis: Ethnographic content analysis	Sample: "10 newly admitted nursing professionals" 10 new nursing professionals Time: March-June 2022	There are two major themes 'A State of Transience Among Newly Graduated Nursing professionals,' which consists of two sub-themes: 'Newly Graduated Nursing professionals' Pursue Professional Development' and 'Supportive Work Environment.' 'Lack of Formal Agreements or Conditions to Meet Expectations for Professional Development.'
6	Science Direct	Yang, Hatanaka 17	Relationship among the nursing practice environment, occupational career, and work engagement of Chinese nursing professionals employed in Japan: A cross-sectional study	International journal of nursing studies	To examine the relationship between the nursing practice environment and career development	Design: Cross-sectional study Questionnaire: Nursing Career Assessment Scale and Practice Environment Scale Analysis: JMP Pro 16 Test: Regression	Sample: 148 Location: 58 hospitals in Japan Time: June-July 2021	Nursing practice environment is positively related to work engagement ($\beta=0.46$, 95 %CI=1.02,1.99, Occupational career scores were also positively related to work engagement ($\beta=0.42$, 95 %CI= 0.51,1.08, $p<.001$)
7	ProQuest	Iheduru-Anderson 24	Barriers to career advancement in the nursing profession: Perceptions of Black nursing professionals in the United States	Nursing Forum	To examine the perceptions of Black nursing professionals regarding barriers to career development in the nursing profession in the United States.	Design: Ethnography Method: Semi-structured interviews via telephone and Skype Data Analysis: Thematic analysis	Sample: 30 nursing professionals Location: USA Time: N/A	Thematic analysis revealed seven main themes: Keeping white nursing professionals comfortable, distrust, there is no one like me, paving the way, worthy of representation, leadership roles are not expected of Black nursing professionals, and advanced degrees do not equal opportunity

No	Databases	Authors	Article title	Journal title	Objective	Design/variables / instruments	Sample/ location	Results
8	Proquest	Sönmez, Gül 25	Antecedents and outcome of nursing professionals subjective career success: a path analysis	Journal of nursing scholars hip	To test a hypothesis model that shows the relationships between individual characteristics, nursing work environment, nursing work environment, subjective career success, job satisfaction, intention to leave, and professional commitments.	Design: Cross-sectional and correlational Method: Using the Subjective Career Success Inventory questionnaire with a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), containing eight sub-dimensions (recognition, quality of work, meaningful work, influence, authenticity, personal life, growth and development, and satisfaction) with 24 items. Data Analysis: Descriptive and correlation analysis	Sample: 604 nursing professionals Location: Four hospitals: a state university hospital (n = 850), a private college hospital (n = 360), general training and research hospitals (n = 530), and general hospitals (n = 250)	The hypothesis model established to test the antecedents and outcomes of subjective career success in nursing professionals is acceptable and has a good fit. Having a master's degree, a rotating work schedule (negative), good individual income, participation in hospital affairs, adequacy of staff and resources, and nursing professional-physician relationships were significantly associated with nursing professionals' subjective career success. Subjective career success has a positive effect on job and professional satisfaction commitment and has a significant negative effect on the intention to leave of nursing professionals.
9	ProQuest	Sandehang, Hariyati and Rachmawati 26	Nursing professional career mapping: a qualitative case study of a new hospital	BMC nursing	To identify career mapping for nursing professionals in a new hospital in Jakarta.	Design: Qualitative Method: Two-session Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Data Analysis: Content analysis	Sample: 14 participants Location: Regional hospital in Jakarta Time: N/A	The study produced seven themes that together describe the entire career mapping process. At Hospital X, a particular nursing professional's career map is based on the level of formal education, length and nature of work experience, and competency assessment. The process of self-assessment and competency-related consideration of all aspects of nursing has been included in the process for nursing professionals at Hospital X, serving as guiding principles for nursing managers.
10	ProQuest	Shin and Kim 27	Operating Room Nursing professionals Want Differentiated Education for Perioperative Competencies—Based on the Clinical Ladder	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	To identify the perioperative competence of OR nursing professionals according to clinical level, including technical and non-technical aspects, as well as educational needs to increase OR competence.	Design: Descriptive cross-sectional study Method: Data collection using an online survey with the Perceived Perioperative Competence Scale-Revised (PPCS-R) instrument. Data Analysis: IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22.0	Sample: 318 operating room nursing professionals Location: Korean tertiary hospitals Time: N/A	There are significant differences in the competency of operating room nursing professionals according to career level as follows: basic knowledge and skills ($p < 0.001$), leadership ($p < 0.001$), collaboration ($p = 0.017$), proficiency ($p < 0.001$), and professional development ($p < 0.001$). Educational needs for basic knowledge and skills (4.43 ± 0.60) were the highest, followed by proficiency (4.26 ± 0.70), collaboration (4.21 ± 0.77), leadership (4.08 ± 0.81), empathy (3.99 ± 0.91), and professional development (3.91 ± 0.76). Educational needs for improving perioperative competency based on the clinical ladder showed significant differences in leadership ($p = 0.026$), proficiency ($p = 0.045$), and professional development ($p = 0.002$).

No	Databases	Authors	Article title	Journal title	Objective	Design/variables / instruments	Sample/location	Results
11	PubMed	Cottle-Quinn, Tower and Eley 20	Factors that impact Australian early career nursing professionals' intentions to remain in their position and the profession: A prospective cohort study	Journal of nursing management	To identify factors that impact/influence the early career development of nursing professionals.	Design: Cohort Method: Data Analysis: To SPSS V.24 and non-probability convenience sampling Ethical clearance Number NMSW 2016/02	Sample: 583 nursing professionals Location: Australia Time: November 2016	The total professional turnover rate was 6.7%. Higher working environment, support and encouragement, and stress in personal life scores were the only predictors of intention to remain in the profession. Statistical modeling could not predict intention to remain in the profession.

Table 2. Methodological quality assessment of included cross-sectional studies

	Cross-sectional	Ahn and Choi ¹⁴	Ghanem Atalla, Sharif ²³	Afriani, Hariyati and Gayatri ²⁹	Sönmez, Gül ¹⁹	Shin and Kim ³⁰	Yang, Hatanaka ¹⁷
Q1	Were the criteria for inclusion in the sample clearly defined?	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Q2	Were the study subjects and the setting described in detail?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Q3	Was the exposure measured in a valid and reliable way?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Unclear	Y
Q4	Were objective, standard criteria used for measurement of the condition?	Y	Y	Unclear	Y	Y	Y
Q5	Were confounding factors identified?	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
Q6	Were strategies to deal with confounding factors stated?	N	N	N	N	N	N
Q7	Were the outcomes measured in a valid and reliable way?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Q8	Was appropriate statistical analysis used?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Percentage		87,5%	87,5%	62,5	75%	50%	75%
Category		H	H	M	H	L	H

Q : Question, Y : Yes, N : No, H : High Quality, M: Medium, L : Low

Risk of BIAS

All studies were assessed for risk of bias using the quality assessment in table 2 which presents a critical appraisal of the 11 included articles. The studies were divided into three groups, namely

Quasi-Experimental, Cohort study, Phenomenology and Cross-sectional study. The quality scores of the included studies ranged from 53% to 88% on a maximum quality score scale of 100% using the Joanna Briggs Institute critical appraisal tool ²⁸.

Table 3. Methodological quality assessment of included cohort studies

Prospective Cohort Study		20
Q1	Are the two groups similar and taken from the same population?	Y
Q2	Is exposure measured in the same way for exposed and unexposed groups?	N
Q3	Is exposure measured in a way that valid and trustworthy?	Y
Q4	Are confounding factors identified?	N
Q5	Are strategies for dealing with confounding factors stated?	Y
Q6	Is the group/participant free from the results at the start of the study (or at during exposure)?	Y
Q7	Are results measured in a way that valid and reliable?	Y
Q8	Whether follow-up time is reported and long enough for results to occur?	N
Q9	Is follow-up complete, and if not, are the reasons for loss to follow-up explained and explored?	Unclear
Q10	What are the strategies for dealing with actions incomplete progress done?	N
Q11	What statistical analysis was used in accordance?	Y
Percentage		45%
Category		L

Q: Question, L: Low Quality, N: No, Y: Yes

Table 4. Methodological quality assessment of included Qualitative studies

	Qualitative	Iheduru-Anderson ²⁴	Sandehang, Hariyati and Rachmawati ²⁶	Kaldal, Voldbjerg ¹⁸	Vilendrer, Amano ¹⁵
Q1	Is there congruity between the stated philosophical perspective and the research methodology?	Y	Y	Y	Y
Q2	Is there congruity between the research methodology and the research question or objectives?	Y	Y	Y	Y
Q3	Is there congruity between the research methodology and the methods used to collect data?	Y	Y	Y	Y
Q4	Is there congruity between the research methodology and the representation and analysis of data?	Y	Y	Y	Y
Q5	Is there congruity between the research methodology and the interpretation of results?	Y	Y	Y	Y
Q6	Is there a statement that clearly locates the researcher culturally or theoretically?	Y	N	Y	N
Q7	Is the influence of the researcher on the research, and vice versa, explicitly addressed?	Y	N	Y	N
Q8	Are participants, and their voices, adequately represented?	Y	Y	N	Y
Q9	Is the research ethical according to current criteria, and for recent studies, is there evidence of ethical approval by an appropriate body?	Y	Y	Y	Y
Q10	Do the conclusions drawn in the research report flow from the analysis, or interpretation, of the data?	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Percentage	100%	80%	90%	80%
	Category	H	H	H	H

Notes: Quality research results with Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI). Questions with answer "Y" means "yes". "N" means "NO". A total score of > 80% is considered high quality "H", 60%-80% medium quality "M" and < 60% low quality "L".

Discussion

The 11 articles included in this study are from Indonesia, China, Japan, the USA, Korea, South Africa, Turkey, and Denmark.

Nursing Professionals in Implementing Career Ladder Programs

Ahn and Choi reported that understanding of career ladder program implementation differed between nursing professionals who participated and those who did not, correlating with increased satisfaction among participants¹⁴. Other studies have also identified factors influencing satisfaction, including organizational commitment and work environment^{31, 32}.

European countries such as Germany have a relatively large number of nursing professionals, yet policymakers remain concerned about a projected shortage of 520,000 nursing professionals by 2030³³. Recognizing the importance of career ladders, Korea, for example, has implemented career ladder programs since 2003, though they have not yet been fully optimized¹⁴.

Career ladders are closely tied to nursing professional competency. A study by Stacie Vilendrer explains the benefits of career ladders in determining clinical appointments or assignments¹⁵. The career ladder system in nursing provides opportunities for professionals to improve their skills, gain recognition, and enhance professionalism³⁴. Career ladders can also serve as a career map for new nursing professionals¹⁸, offering a strategic approach by providing clear direction for achieving career goals.

A career ladder is one strategy to improve nursing professionalism. When nursing professionals work at a higher professional standard, it enhances the quality of patient services and reduces the risk of accidents.

Benefits of Nursing Career Ladder Programs

Career ladder programs are integral to Continuing Professional Development (CPD)^{35, 36} and vice versa³⁷. CPD itself is a process that nursing professionals must complete to maintain high standards of care and professional practice³⁸.

Career ladders have been shown to increase nursing performance and improve hospital quality^{39, 40}. Opportunities to increase knowledge and education through career ladders enhance work performance and directly benefit patients^{41, 42}, as patients treated by nursing professionals with higher levels of professionalism tend to report greater satisfaction⁴³. Nursing professionalism can also reduce the length of hospital stays, leading to more controlled patient care costs. Involvement in professional practice has further benefits, including improved consultation times, reduced mortality, and cost savings⁴⁴.

The role of all stakeholders, including nursing managers, in supporting the implementation of nursing career ladders is crucial. This support should begin with mapping learning needs and career plans⁴⁵. Career ladder programs vary across countries. In Korea, for instance, the Career Efficacy Enhancement Program has been proven to improve career decision-making and self-efficacy among nursing professionals³⁹.

Conclusion

This study expands our understanding of the role and function of career ladders in enhancing the professionalism and career stability of nursing professionals. Based on the reviewed articles, career ladders are highly effective for maintaining organizational commitment, providing job satisfaction, and offering clear career mapping for new nursing professionals.

Active support and encouragement from all stakeholders—including management and healthcare service leaders—are essential to the success of career ladder programs. By promoting professional growth, career ladders help young nursing professionals deliver higher-quality care to patients and clients. They also serve as a framework for increasing nursing competencies and determining clinical appointments or responsibilities according to career ladder levels.

Author Contribution

The roles are delineated as follows: Conceptualization by HA, RRTS, TAP, and EN; Methodology by HA and RRTS; Software by EN and TAP; Validation by HA, EN, and RRTS; Formal Analysis by HA, RRTS, and TAP;

Investigation by EN; Resources by HA; Data Curation by HA, RRTS, TAP, and EN; Writing – Original Draft Preparation by HA and RRTS; Writing – Review & Editing by EN and TAP; Visualization by HA; and Supervision by EN, RRTS, and TAP.

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