

## Managerial Readiness Scale for Academic Managers in Philippine Colleges of Nursing: An Exploratory Sequential Design

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### Abstract

**Background:** Deans of nursing colleges possess a unique capacity to impact the academic community and the practice of nursing. However, existing literature indicates that individuals assigned to this role must be adequately prepared. To date, no scale measures readiness for this role. **Objectives:** The study aimed to develop a valid and reliable research scale to measure managerial readiness among middle-level academic managers in Philippine nursing colleges. **Methods:** This study employed exploratory sequential design. Nine informants were purposively chosen for in-depth interviews and five for focus group discussions in the qualitative phase based on the criteria set in the study. One hundred supervisors, coordinators, and deans in various nursing colleges were purposefully selected in the quantitative phase. A thematic analysis was done to extract themes from the informants' views on managerial readiness. This qualitative data was used to develop the managerial readiness scale. Construct validity was done to determine the extent to which the items in a measurement tool represent the entire range of content the tool is supposed to measure. Factor analysis was used to identify the constructs of the data. **Results:** The informants' lived experiences as deans of nursing were encapsulated in the following themes: constant struggle for managerial skills enhancement, nurturing of managerial and supervision competence, and promotion in the nobility in the nursing education profession. Informants further stated that the underlying dimensions of managerial readiness are as follows: professional expertise, work ethics, leadership effectiveness, intrapersonal skills, affiliation and loyalty, personality and disposition, academic acumen, and administrative backing. Results revealed that the developed managerial readiness scale was factored into five dimensions: leadership and management effectiveness, self-management (intrapersonal) skills, organization conversance, administrative competency, and legal insight. After reliability testing, the reliability of the developed scale in all dimensions was high, indicating that the scale had an excellent internal consistency. Data integration pointed out that the qualitative data connected to and built up the quantitative data in this study. **Conclusions:** Being a middle-level academic manager was a challenging designation to fill in. Unfamiliarity with one's roles and functions, facing challenges due to the diversity of the roles of being a dean, getting caught in between the demands coming from the upper management, one's subordinates, and other stakeholders; and dealing with workplace politics and work-life imbalance were among the many concerns that deans face daily. **Implications:** All these issues called for the need to garner years of experience as an academic, improving oneself through formal education and training, and the institution's functional succession planning for middle-level academic managers.

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Institutions may use the developed managerial scale in this study as it has been found to have high reliability in measuring readiness to be middle-level academic managers in a Philippine nursing college.

**Keywords:** *Education, nursing, managerial readiness, academic middle-level manager, exploratory sequential design, Philippines*

## Introduction

Deans of nursing colleges hold a pivotal influence not only on leading the changes in nursing education, practice, policy, and standards (Sessler-Branden & Sharts-Hopko, 2017; Dowling & Melillo, 2015) but also on the future of the nursing profession itself (Bouws, 2018; Morton, 2014), highlighting the need of equipping and preparing future nursing deans of the tools and resources they need for a successful transition (Phillips, 2020). However, there is uncertainty about the readiness of these academic managers, primarily due to the constantly evolving complexity of the role of a dean of nursing and the absence of adequate support for their preparedness (Berman, 2015; Blass, 2011; Giddens, 2018; Giddens & Morton, 2018; Wolverson & Gmelch, 2002; Quell, 2005).

Nursing deans have undergone significant changes, and their duties and tasks have become more intricate over time (Giddens, 2018). As department or program heads, they serve as the top executives responsible for maintaining the department's operations (including finances, services, management, and workforce) and ensuring the college achieves its desired outcomes (Berman, 2015; Giddens & Morton, 2018). A dean oversees various aspects of a college, including academics, research, faculty activities, student affairs, and communication. In addition, they are expected to manage the college's finances, recruit faculty, allocate space, and make decisions regarding program and personnel policies (Fang & Mainous, 2019; Bouws, 2018). Deans, who act as liaisons between the nursing school's faculty, staff, and students and the university administration, occupy a strategic position within the organization. Nevertheless, this position also places them in a precarious position, as they are compelled to negotiate the conflicting interests of both parties (Butin, 2016; Wilkes et al., 2015). Considering the complexity of the roles of deans and nurse executives, individuals should be prepared to take on these positions. Early identification of nurses with the potential to develop the skills required to assume these positions in the future is a first step in ensuring that there will be qualified candidates to lead nursing. To better equip nurse middle-level academic managers, strategic processes for academic succession planning and management are needed (Ocho et al., 2020; Tucker, 2020).

However, multiple studies have indicated that deans often assume their positions without receiving any leadership training, lacking prior executive experience, lacking a clear understanding of the ambiguity associated with their new roles, lacking awareness of the transformative changes that occur, and lacking an understanding of the potential negative impact on their academic and personal lives. These factors can significantly complicate the transition to a deanship (Blass, 2011; Dimici et al., 2016; DeLilly, 2018; Quell, 2005; Sessler-Branden & Sharts-Hopko, 2017; Wolverson & Gmelch, 2002; Wong et al., 2013). Also, historically, academic leadership equates age and time spent in academia with readiness for educational leadership. The specifics included in the roles and responsibilities of succeeding nurse middle-level academic managers usually must be made clear by the predecessor (DeLilly, 2018; DeZure et al., 2014; Emory et al., 2017; Morris & Laipple, 2015). These issues are concerning, considering that middle-level academic managers in nursing education require clarity and unencumbered work role transition (Matveev, 2002; Raguindin, 2015).

The middle-level manager is often overlooked in the literature. According to Delgado and Mitchell (2015), more literature should be explored on nursing academic leadership. Studies on transition to managerial roles have also focused on nurse managers in the hospital setting. The literature's limitation supports the need to explore nursing middle-level academic managers to understand better the upcoming managers' need for preparation, education, and promotion (Sherman & Saifman, 2018; DeZure et al., 2014).

Given the strategic significance of middle-level managers and the intricacy of their duties, assessing the managerial preparedness of candidates for these roles is crucial, as it may enhance the management capabilities of higher education institutions, particularly those providing Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees. This exploration is also necessary since, to the best of the proponent of this paper's knowledge, a dearth of available research has focused on this topic at the time of this writing. Although Raguindin (2015) had explored the level of competencies of the deans of nursing in the higher education institutions in the Bicol Region, Philippines, the study was only focused on determining the competency of the respondents on the following key areas: manager-leader, practitioner, and researcher – constructs that do not fully cover the critical competencies of middle-level academic managers in recent literature (Pham et al., 2019). According to a former Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Technical Committee on Nursing Education member, there needs to be more deans in the country. This is either because nursing school deans are leaving the country for better opportunities abroad or because the number of nursing schools in the Philippines has grown, resulting in a greater need for deans (Crisostomo, 2006). These concerns highlight the need for additional deans to fill this shortage.

This study aims to develop and validate a tool to assess the managerial readiness of nursing deans in the Philippines. The need for such a tool arises from a significant gap in the existing literature regarding assessing readiness for managerial roles, specifically within nursing education institutions. Currently, no available tools are tailored to determine the unique challenges and requirements of nursing deans in the Philippines. The novelty of this tool lies in its focus on the specific context of nursing education in the Philippines and its alignment with the experiences and expectations of middle-level academic managers within this setting. By incorporating insights from qualitative interviews with nursing deans, the researcher ensures that the dimensions of managerial readiness are grounded in the realities of the Philippine nursing education landscape.

Moreover, the development of this tool holds practical significance for nursing education institutions in the Philippines. A validated instrument to assess managerial readiness will enable these institutions to make more informed decisions in their human resource planning processes, particularly in selecting and appointing future nursing deans. By identifying and cultivating individuals who possess the requisite skills and experiences for effective leadership, this tool has the potential to enhance the quality and sustainability of leadership within Philippine nursing schools.

## **Methods**

### ***Research Design***

An exploratory sequential design was used in this study. An exploratory sequential mixed method combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in phases (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative data from interviews were used to inform the development of items for the survey instrument.

Specifically, the researcher used the phenomenological research design for the qualitative phase of this study. This design was used to examine human experiences through the descriptions provided by the people involved, usually done through an in-depth interview and varied angles of viewing, listening, and understanding the reality of the situation (Creswell, 2014). This design is utilized because it is suitable in research studies where variables have yet to be identified, or a theory has yet to be built (Morrow et al., 2015). In this study's context, the participants' lived experiences as middle-level academic managers in Philippine colleges of nursing and the underlying dimensions of managerial readiness were explored.

Connecting and building up on the results of the qualitative aspect of this study, the researcher conducted the quantitative phase to test or generalize the initial findings from the qualitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Construct validity of middle-level academic managerial readiness scale was evaluated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) through a cross-sectional,

methodological study following the steps one to four of the scale development process of Park and Kim (2021). Construct validity evaluates whether a measurement tool represents the construct the research is interested in measuring. It is central to establishing the overall validity of a method (Middleton, 2020). In this study, the developed questionnaire, formulated from the emerging themes of thematic analysis, was subjected to validity and reliability checks. Consequently, the instrument underwent Cronbach's alpha test to check for internal consistency (Creswell, 2014).

### ***Participants and Setting***

For the qualitative phase of this study, nine middle-level academic managers from the selected colleges of nursing in the Philippines participated in an in-depth interview via online teleconferencing. For the follow-up interview, five out of the nine in-depth interview informants participated in the focus group discussion. The informants were chosen based on the following inclusion criteria: must be full-pledged registered nurses, currently full-time employees in a CHED-recognized college of nursing in the Philippines, must have at least three years of teaching experience as a nursing clinical instructor, must have at least three years of experience as a supervisor or coordinator in nursing education, and must have at least three years of experience as a dean, associate dean, or program chair/head of a college of nursing in the Philippines. Those who did not fall under these criteria were excluded from the sample.

For the succeeding quantitative phase, 100 supervisors, coordinators, and deans in various colleges of nursing in the Philippines participated in the study. To attain homogeneity of respondents, the following criteria were set: should be a full-time instructor in a college of nursing in the Philippines, must have at least three years of teaching experience as a nursing clinical instructor, and must have at least one year of experience as a supervisor or coordinator in nursing education. Those who did not fall under these criteria were excluded from the sample. The researcher aimed to have at least 100 respondents following the suggestion of Hair et al. (1995, as cited in William et al., 2012) that sample sizes should be 100 or more significant when conducting exploratory factor analysis.

The schools selected for the qualitative phase of this study offer Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees and are recognized by CHED in the Philippines. Two were from Luzon, four from Visayas, and three from Mindanao. CHED accreditation ensures adherence to national standards in higher education, affirming the quality of the participating institutions' nursing programs (CHED, 2017). Furthermore, these schools have consistently produced successful board passers in the nurse licensure examinations (Cruz, 2019; PRC, 2018a; PRC, 2018b; PRC, 2019a; PRC, 2019b). The quantitative phase data was gathered through an online survey, and it was opened to eligible respondents who came from schools offering CHED-recognized Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees in the Philippines, spanning Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

### ***Instruments***

Using a researcher-made interview guide validated by five research experts, nursing deans were interviewed about managerial readiness. The interview was designed to learn about the informants' experiences as middle-level academic managers in a Philippine nursing college and how they view academic manager readiness. Each of the five primary questions in this interview process featured two to three probing questions, totaling 14. Five research experts validated guide questions. After in-depth interviews, a focus group discussion was held to supplement the findings that had been initially gathered.

The managerial readiness scale and its items were created based on the interviews. Five experts verified the content validity of the interview questions to ensure they covered managerial readiness dimensions before performing an exploratory factor analysis. Then, the organizational readiness scale was analyzed using exploratory factor analysis.

### ***Data Collection***

For the qualitative phase, interviews were conducted online utilizing Zoom for data collection. This study used a semi-structured online interview with preset open-ended questions to allow informants to respond spontaneously and in-depth. Interviews lasted 60–120 minutes. After in-depth interviews, a 45–to 60-minute focus group discussion was held.

To minimize cross-infection and viral transmission, the researcher and informants found conducting interviews online more convenient and safer. Traveling to other Philippine islands is similarly challenging. Thus, online data collection was favored. Interview data were encoded after retrieval. After qualitative data analysis, the initial version of the managerial readiness scale was drafted.

For the quantitative phase, the draft of the developed scale was validated by five research experts. Then, the scale was sent to target respondents electronically with the help of the research offices of the target universities after approval. Google Forms was used to create the online survey questionnaire. Consenting respondents were given a website link by email or Messenger app containing the informed consent form, participant information sheet, and research questionnaire. Once the data was collected and processed using exploratory factor analysis, the scale items were reduced from 45 to 26. Five research experts validated the new scale. For the reliability testing, the scale was sent out to eligible respondents who did not previously participate in the initial survey. The study was conducted from January 2021 to May 2021.

## **Data Analysis**

### *Qualitative Data Analysis*

Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step framework was used for the qualitative data analysis of this study. The researcher familiarized himself with the data, generated initial codes, searched for, reviewed, and defined themes, and discussed the findings. The researcher did the interview, transcription, coding, and development of thematic maps manually with the guidance of a qualitative research expert. In the initial qualitative phase of the study, the researcher collected data through interviews with the informants. Through content analysis, recurring themes related to the lived experiences and the dimensions of managerial readiness as perceived by the informants were explored. These emergent themes informed the development of items for the instrument. Extracting from the thematic analysis, the initial version of the managerial readiness scale was drafted.

### *Quantitative Data Analysis*

The quantitative analysis started with checking the content validity of the developed scale. Items were assessed based on one construct – i.e., managerial readiness. Content validity was calculated using I-CVI, S-CVI/UA, and S-CVI. The next step involved testing the data for suitability using the Kaiser-Meyer-Okin measure of sampling adequacy, which signaled in advance whether the sample size was large enough to extract factors reliably. Bartlett's test was also done to test for the overall significance of the correlation within a correlation matrix. Communality estimation was then performed to calculate initial estimates of the shared variance in each variable (Beavers et al., 2013; Costello & Osborne, 2005).

Then, the number of factor structures was derived. This was done by comparing the eigenvalues extracted from the researcher's dataset through the principal component analysis and those calculated from the web-based engine designed by Patil et al. (2008) to ascertain the number of factors to retain (See Table 4). In other words, the method used to derive the number of factor structures for this study was Horn's parallel analysis (Ledesma & Valero-Mora, 2007). In this analysis, the number of factors retained is the number of eigenvalues generated from the researcher's dataset that are larger than the corresponding random eigenvalues (Horn, 1965). The factor loadings from the principal axis factor analysis with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization for a factor structure were then derived. Loadings of items in the factors above 0.4 were retained, whereas items with loadings below 0.4 were removed as those were considered suppressed factor loadings (Johnson & Stevens, 2001).

It was ensured that, in every item, only one weight or loading was considered to predict each item, as is warranted for "clean" factor analysis. Hence, cross-loadings were addressed. The methods used in the study of Stamper and Masterton (2002) were observed to address cross-loadings. The study posited that the convention for figuring out cross-loading is to check the difference between the highest and second-highest loading for an item. The item suffers from cross-loading if the absolute difference is less than or equal to 0.2. As a result, such items should be deleted. If it is more significant than 0.2, the highest loading may be considered an interpretation factor. This decision to select the highest loading was supported by Hair et al. (1998), who emphasized that if there are cross-loadings, the item that can best represent the factor shall be selected.

The identified factors were then named. Once the factors have been called, the last phase focuses on testing the reliability of the obtained factor structure. To do so, the scale was subjected to validity and reliability checks, mainly done through content validation and Cronbach's alpha test. The items were now assessed based on whether the items within each factor represented a coherent and meaningful subset of the five factors being measured.

### ***Ethical Consideration***

This exploratory sequential research study collected data using methodical stages that followed the research design and the University of the Immaculate Conception (UIC) study criteria. The researcher was granted permission from the UIC Graduate School Dean to conduct the study. The UIC Research Ethics Committee (REC) provided ethics approval for this study after a full board review. All informants and respondents received information letters about the study. Informants in qualitative interviews and respondents in quantitative surveys signed consent forms. The researcher followed transparency, legitimate purpose, and proportionality while collecting, storing, and processing personal data (National Privacy Commission, 2012).

### ***Trustworthiness of the Study***

It was assured by the researcher that the data that were gathered in this research study were trustworthy. To address these issues, the recommendations proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to ensure trustworthiness of a study were considered on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

*Credibility.* The researcher made use of research methods that were well-established and were duly validated by research experts in the field of qualitative study. The purposive selection of the respondents for this study, for one, was done to ensure that the views of the middle-level academic managers in nursing education are obtained substantially. In addition, triangulation was observed to increase the accuracy of the data.

*Transferability.* The researcher ensured that the writing of the manuscript included not only describing the phenomenon under study, but also the context in which that phenomenon occurs. Since persistent observation is difficult to realize in this time of pandemic, the participants were encouraged to provide rich textual context to their responses during the interviews instead.

*Dependability.* The processes of the conduct of the study were reported in a detailed manner to allow future researchers to replicate the study. If necessitated, an inquiry auditor was also tapped to ensure dependability. An inquiry audit for a researcher auditor to examine the process of the study and determine its acceptability to the dependability of the study. The researcher investigated the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations and investigated whether the study was supported by data and was trustworthy.

*Confirmability.* It was made sure that appropriate tools were used for testing, proper statistical tools were utilized for data analysis, suitable inclusion and exclusion criteria were set in the selection of participants, and normality of data were established prior to analysis. The researcher avoided personal biases and observations during the conduct of the research and allowed the participants to check the transcriptions of the study. Consequently, the audit trails were included in the presentation of results.

## Results

### *Profile of the Participants*

Table 1 shows the profile of the participants who participated in the study, particularly in its qualitative aspect. The pool of participants for the qualitative strand consisted of nine purposively chosen middle-level academic managers from the selected nursing colleges in the Philippines. Three were from Mindanao, four from Visayas, and the others from Luzon. Eight of the participants were female; one was male. The participants were full-pledged registered nurses, currently full-time employees in a CHED-accredited college of nursing in the Philippines, have had at least three years of teaching experience as a nursing clinical instructor, at least three years of experience as a supervisor or coordinator, and at least three years of experience as a dean, associate dean, or program chair/head of a college of nursing. Most participants were affiliated with private colleges and universities; only two came from government-owned higher educational institutions.

**Table 1**  
*Profile of the Respondents*

<b>IDI</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Length of Service as Dean of Nursing</b>
IDI-L1	F	5
IDI-L2	F	5
IDI-V1	M	3
IDI-V2	F	3
IDI-V3	F	3
IDI-V4	F	3
IDI-M1	F	3
IDI-M2	F	3
IDI-M3	F	3
<b>Focus-group discussion</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Length of Service as Dean of Nursing</b>
FGD-D1	F	3
FGD-D2	F	3
FGD-D3	F	3
FGD-D4	F	3
FGD-D5	F	3

### **Lived Experiences of the Informants as a Middle-Level Academic Manager of a Philippine College of Nursing**

The thematic analysis of the lived experiences of the informants and middle-level academic managers in various nursing colleges in the Philippines is discussed below. A careful study of the interviews resulted in 23 core ideas, seven categories, and three emergent themes. The emerging themes were presented and supported by textural descriptions of the informants' direct utterances.

#### ***Constant Struggle for Managerial Skills Enhancement***

The first issue probed as part of the exploration of the lived experiences of the respondents was their constant struggle for managerial skills enhancement. For the informants of this study, this

is attributable to several factors. For the most part, however, deans hurdled this struggle owing to the ambiguity of their roles and functions as middle-level academic managers, not to mention that the designation itself is laden with several challenges. The majority of the deans rose to the position without experiencing proper succession planning. They were fit for the role and could take the office with little assistance or training. On top of this, having had to wear many hats for the position has also led to ambiguity in their role and functions, most especially during the early period of their deanship. In addition, individuals in middle-level academic management positions face the pressures of being superior in their department, the demands of being a subordinate despite being a dean, and the complexities of being a middleman – i.e., getting caught in the crossfire of demands from upper management, subordinates, and other stakeholders (internal and external), and dealing with workplace politics. The informants understood this was not a simple task, highlighting the importance of managerial skill development.

*Even though I have been a program coordinator... being the dean is still different. Many other aspects, roles, and responsibilities are uniquely for the dean. (IDI-L2)*

*These are the aspects that, even if you have been in the position for quite some time, can still be problematic as things are just beyond your control, like ensuring enough faculty and strategic planning... (IDI-V3)*

### ***Nurturing of Managerial and Supervision Competence***

The second issue probed in the qualitative aspect of this study was the need to nurture one's managerial and supervision competence. As the informants of this study expressed, cultivating one's competence entails essentially honing skills for higher, more advanced capacity, appreciating wisdom gained through experience, and strengthening one's support system.

The first of the many ways the informants stated that one can nurture one's managerial and supervisory competency is by sharpening one's skills for advanced capacity. Sharpening one's skills entailed understanding the roles and responsibilities of a middle-level manager and the scope of one's practice, advancing one's career as a middle-level academic manager through formal education and participation in training, seminars, and workshops, and acquiring and honing leadership and management skills.

The other way to develop one's capability that the informants indicated was to value wisdom gained through experience. This involved accumulating years of experience as an instructor, accumulating years of experience as a coordinator or supervisor, becoming intimately familiar with the institution with which one is affiliated, including its people and culture, adjusting one's personal, internal dynamics to the middle-level academic managership, and acquiring skills for dealing with workplace politics.

In attempting to nurture one's managerial and supervision competency, the informants also regarded that a middle-level academic manager should ask for support when needed. Assuming that functioning in a managerial role does not happen overnight, leadership and managerial preparation must be part of a continual process that involves formal study and hands-on learning in the field. To prepare future academic managers to become effective in their leadership and managerial roles, support how individuals' sense of self-identity and career goals should be fostered in the organization. Apart from administrative support, middle-level managers should also receive such support from their colleagues, subordinates, or even from their families.

*Grab the opportunity to learn, especially from the activities of ADPCN; it can be beneficial. Be excited to learn from others... (IDI-L2)*



*Keeping myself aware of the internal and external issues and working collaboratively with top management colleagues and subordinates keeps me grounded. (IDI-L1)*

### **Promotion of Nobility of Nursing Education Profession**

After highlighting the constant struggle for managerial skills enhancement brought about by the ambiguity of roles and functions, the designation of being a dean being challenge-laden, and the need to nurture their managerial and supervision competence to address such struggle, the third issue that was probed in this study was the insights of the informants on being middle-level managers. Collectively, the deans campaigned to promote the nobility of the nursing education profession. After the talks with the participating nursing deans from various schools in the Philippines, the informants showed that a middle-level manager needs help with difficulties. Nonetheless, the informants agreed that such adversities should be embraced as opportunities for professional growth. After all, the difficulty of being a middle-level academic manager, from the deans' perspective, is just a phase, and, despite its challenges, being a middle-level academic manager is a fulfilling position.

Furthermore, the informants also realized that it is critical to recognize one's skills and shortcomings if one wishes to become a nursing dean. The informants deem this a necessary effort that will ultimately lead to self-actualization. Self-awareness and personal mission are critical components of becoming a successful middle-level academic manager. Self-aware academic managers assess and familiarize themselves with their strengths and the best ways to use them to empower and encourage their faculty members. They also understand their flaws: patterns and blind spots, when to pause before saying or doing something, what not to attempt, where to surround themselves with complementary viewpoints and methods, and where to direct personal improvement efforts. Academic managers who cultivate this level of self-awareness often recognize their own beliefs and objectives, as well as their alignment with the meaning and mission of their work in the nursing academe. They think carefully about why they take leadership positions, have specific goals in mind for their roles, and recognize what they need to function effectively as heads of the program, such as succession planning. Succession preparation entails cultivating an interest in leadership by creating opportunities for teachers to engage in leadership and gain a better understanding of its day-to-day activities, as well as educating aspirant leaders.

*Being a dean is a fulfilling role to fill in. Although I encountered several challenges when I was starting, I cannot deny that seeing our students succeed and excel in life brings me joy. (IDI-L2)*

*To be a dean is not about the title or the position. It is service, a vocation even. It needs commitment. (IDI-V3)*

### **Searching for the Underlying Dimensions of Managerial Readiness**

This section presents what constitutes managerial readiness as the participating nursing deans perceive. It shows what characteristics an academic middle manager should possess and what factors can facilitate readiness to assume the position. The emerging themes are presented and supported by textural descriptions of the informants' direct utterances.

#### **Professional Expertise**

In the search for the underlying dimensions of managerial readiness, the first issue probed in the interviews was the informants' ideals of being a middle-level academic manager. Professional expertise is one of the most essential ideals of middle-level management that is unique to the teaching profession. According to the informants, professional expertise entails holistic competence and academic excellence while possessing a good grasp of nursing research, education, and clinical

practice. In other words, one of the facets of being ready for the deanship entails achieving the highest possible educational milestone and being closely familiar with the triumvirate of the nursing profession – i.e., nursing practice, education, and research.

As a dean, one must model excellence in teaching to the rest of the faculty members. This is the case because deans set the pace in the department, and others will follow what the deans demonstrate to the team. According to the informants, their experiences as clinical nurses, nursing instructors, and researchers are integral to becoming middle-level academic managers. These experiences provide insights into their roles as deans.

*Ensuring one's professional development is important. To be secure in one's academic achievement, professional experience, collaboration, and networks help one prepare for the challenges and keep one grounded. (IDI-L1)*

### **Work Ethics**

Work ethics was the second dimension of managerial readiness that the participating deans floated in the discussions about the ideals of being a middle-level academic manager. According to the informants, working as a dean of nursing requires high professionalism and integrity. Holding the job necessitates being skilled at one's work and that of one's subordinates, adhering to high moral standards and being honorable. Managing and leading are intrinsically ethics-laden activities because any managerial decision can impact individuals or the natural world. Therefore, the impacts or results of each decision must be considered.

*Let us remember the need to be knowledgeable about the position! The aspiring dean must be knowledgeable about the intricacies of the position. If not, how will you run the department if you do not fully grasp what you are supposed to do? (IDI-M1)*

### **Leadership Effectiveness**

The third dimension of managerial readiness that the participating deans underscored in the exploration of the ideals of being a middle-level academic manager was leadership effectiveness. Leadership effectiveness means being proficient in one's academic governance. This further meant that being a middle-level academic manager requires exemplary leadership, social, and proper management skills.

Leadership and social skills, on the one hand, meant being capable of leading the team, trusting one's staff members, communicating with and empowering them, delegating tasks to them if necessary, and possessing the capability to confront and deal with conflicts. On the other hand, having the right management skills meant managing the resources of one's department, all with the intent of meeting the nursing departments and the institution's goals and objectives.

*A dean should also learn how and when to delegate activities and tasks. Deans cannot handle everything, so I think it is most important for deans to know the concept of delegation. This can also be a means for the deans to show their trust to their subordinates. (IDI-V2)*

*Success comes in numbers, and if you are planning to face a war on your own, you are facing a losing war... However, if you are with your soldiers and faculty, supporting your cause, vision, and mission, you will be very successful. (IDI-M2)*

### **Intrapersonal Skills**

More than being able to lead and manage other people towards the attainment of the goals and objectives of one's department and institution, it is also considered ideal for middle-level academic managers to be able to manage themselves, hence the consideration of intrapersonal skills as one of the dimensions of managerial readiness. Effective leadership can only be attained with the appropriate intrapersonal skills. This entails managing oneself, which is realized by being mature and possessing the proper personality traits and intrapersonal intelligence for deanship. This includes personality traits such as, but not limited to, assertiveness, consistency, courage, patience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and open-mindedness or openness to experience.

*It would help if you were firm because many people, or even your subordinates, will dictate to you what to do. (IDI-M1)*

*Another one would have to be being strong and resilient. If you do not have these qualities, you will end up crying... I think one of the factors that would help in the transition to this position is the personality and grit of the candidate. (IDI-V1)*

### **Affiliation and Loyalty**

Affiliation and loyalty are other dimensions the informants perceived as ideal for a middle-level academic manager. Affiliation in this context refers to the extent of familiarity with the university organization and its processes. Knowing the institution, including its people and the culture and practices observed by those above, fosters camaraderie and synergy within the organization. Moreover, loyalty to the organization implies a commitment to the institution's mission and vision. Academic nurse leaders have a fundamental duty to guide the college or department of nursing in developing or reaffirming the college or university's mission and vision. It is imbuing the university's values as part of the professional identity and as part of the identity of the college and the students. As discussed by the informants, any dean needs to be committed to their work and the institution because commitment facilitates a positive energy for work engagement and productivity despite the challenges that may be encountered.

The informants have determined that to become an effective middle-level academic manager, nursing deans must be professional experts, possess strong work ethics, imbibe leadership effectiveness, hold firm intrapersonal skills, and value affiliation and loyalty with one's institution. These ideals make a faculty member fit for assuming deanship and becoming an academic middle manager. However, more than having these characteristics may be needed to be successful in the role. According to the informants, three factors affect a person's readiness to assume the managerial role – i.e., personality and disposition, academic acumen, and administrative competency. These factors can facilitate or hinder a faculty's transition into academic middle management.

*Knowing the institution, the people, and the organization's culture is important. This is to maximize the synergy needed to accomplish tasks and the strategic goals and objectives of the institution. (IDI-L1)*

### **Personality and Disposition**

The first of the three factors that enable or hinder the readiness of an academic towards assuming the deanship is one's very own personality and disposition. In this study, personality and disposition refer to the inherent qualities of the mind and character of a person. This involves how a person carries and behaves himself and his set of personal beliefs and values. This includes the willingness to take the candidate's lead, his disposition towards the role, and the challenges that are yet to come along with such a designation. The personality and disposition of a person are believed to affect how would-be deans positively or negatively would prepare themselves for the role or whether they will accept the responsibility. In other words, when a person needs to possess the

required personal attributes for the work of a dean, assuming the said designation may come as complicated or even overwhelming for the would-be dean. On the other hand, if a person possesses the personality traits and a state of mind appropriate for the deanship, executing the roles and functions of being one would be a breeze.

*A person's mindset really impacts the readiness of a person for this position [being a dean of a college of nursing]. I would even argue that this is more important than acquiring too many educational degrees when discussing managerial readiness. (FGD-D5)*

### **Academic Acumen**

Another critical factor that may positively or negatively affect a person's readiness for middle-level management that is unique to the teaching profession is academic acumen. Academic acumen entails having the capacity to make good and quick decisions that are beneficial for one's department. This also entails being productive in one's line of work as a nurse academician. Expectedly, this requires possessing the professional breadth and depth necessary for deanship. Breadth and depth, in this context, are measured by having a portfolio of academic excellence as an educator in the nursing academe, having a profound knowledge of the educational laws and policies that govern nursing practice and education in the Philippines, possessing vital academic perspectives in nursing education, training, and research, being an advocate for continuous academic development, having an understanding of the social reality and how it affects nursing as a profession, and being able to create linkages within and outside the academic community, to name a few.

According to the participating deans, when a person deems he does not possess the level of academic acumen necessitated for the deanship, it may hinder him from assuming the said role. In contrast, when a would-be dean believes that he possesses the level of academic acumen required for the designation, he would deem that he is ready for the position or, at the very least, this belief would help him in readying himself for the assumption of the role of a dean.

Let us remember the need to be knowledgeable about the position! The aspiring dean must be knowledgeable about the intricacies of the position...The person should know the limits of her duty and job description. (IDI-M1)

...Deans also must understand that knowing the education law is essential to being a dean because, as heads of a department... (IDI-V4)

### **Administrative Backing**

The last factor that the participating deans considered as having the potential to support or negate the readiness of a faculty for the dean's role is administrative backing. Administrative backing peers into the organizational know-how of the aspiring deans and the availability of support from one's administrators. With organizational know-how, it would be easier for aspiring deans to effectively identify themselves as part of the organization they will work with, much less manage the department they will look after. Without the support from one's administrators, aspiring deans may become discouraged from assuming the role of being a dean, let alone considering it a possibility at all, owing mainly to the apprehension that if they accept the designation without receiving support from their superiors, all their actions for the department and the institution will be for naught.

*I think one of the pushing or pulling factors that aspiring deans consider before taking the dean's position is the availability of support from the upper admin. A dean must have the backing of the admin to go far. (FGD-D4)*

*It is part of my role to know my budget and its implementation... I was able to understand the intricacies of financial and accounting matters and their impact on our daily operations and revenue [because of the admin] ... (IDI-V3)*

### **The Dimensions of Managerial Readiness Model that arise from the themes**

Table 2 shows the developed questionnaire, composed of 45 items that encapsulate the dimensions of managerial readiness among middle-level academic managers in the Philippine Colleges of Nursing. The core ideas of the emerging themes in the qualitative data results were used to construct the questionnaire. This drafted questionnaire was administered to 100 deans/ asst. deans/ program chairs/ supervisors/ coordinators in various colleges and universities in the Philippines offering Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The respondents were asked to determine the level of their agreement for each item in the checklist using a five-point Likert scale as their options for their responses: 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (moderately agree), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree).

The respondents' responses to the questions that measure managerial readiness were encoded and subjected to EFA to determine the underlying dimensions of managerial readiness among middle-level academic managers in the Philippine nursing colleges. This test explored whether the themes generated from qualitative data were manifested in the questionnaire. Moreover, EFA was used by the researcher to discover the number of factors that influence certain variables.

From the evaluation of five research experts, the content validity score of the scale, calculated using I-CVI, S-CVI/UA, and S-CVI (Ave) scores, was 1. This was acceptable if five or fewer experts evaluated the scale (Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006; Rubio et al., 2003).

**Table 2**

*Drafted Questionnaire on Middle-Level Academic Managerial Readiness*

<b>Statements</b>		<b>Theme</b>
1	I try to delegate as many tasks as possible in their complete entirety.	Leadership Effectiveness
2	I am well-acquainted about the work that a nursing clinical instructor does.	Work Ethics
3	I have gained considerable experience from being a staff nurse that has become relevant to my profession as an academician.	Professional Expertise
4	I believe that I have garnered the necessary educational qualifications and trainings necessitated to become a dean.	Professional Expertise
5	I am familiar with the protocol of resolving issues in my work involving student and faculty discipline.	Interpersonal Skills
6	I am well-aware of what strategic planning is and how to do it for the nursing department or college of nursing.	Leadership Effectiveness
7	I am knowledgeable about the process of monitoring the attendance, punctuality, behavior, and performance of both clinical instructors and students in the clinical area.	Academic Acumen
8	I am familiar with process of initiating marketing programs intended to entice potential students to enroll in the nursing department.	Academic Acumen
9	I have been with the institution for quite some time already, enough to say that I am familiar with the institution.	Affiliation and Loyalty
10	I consider myself to be productive in research, production, extension, and instruction.	Professional Expertise
11	I am familiar with the culture of the organization that I am currently in.	Affiliation and Loyalty

12	I can identify what policies, programs, and procedures are needed to be put in place in order to achieve the short- and long-term goals and objectives for the department.	Leadership Effectiveness
13	I am well-acquainted with the research process.	Professional Expertise
14	I know what capital and operational expenses are and where the funds for such expenses for the department are sourced from.	Leadership Effectiveness
15	I am familiar with the process of making financial plans for the operations of the department.	Leadership Effectiveness
16	Preparing weekly and/or monthly reports of my accomplishments comes easy for me.	Leadership Effectiveness
17	I know how to develop and present reports on plans, policies, actions, and results of the college.	Leadership Effectiveness
18	I understand that my work may sometimes demand more work hours from me, so I do not get easily frustrated if I would spend more hours of my day for my work.	Personality and Disposition
19	I am quite familiar with the Philippine Nursing Act, and how it influences the nursing education and practice in the Philippines.	Academic Acumen
20	I am well-acquainted with the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines set by the Commission on Higher Education for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing.	Academic Acumen
21	I am well-acquainted with the education laws that govern the offering of collegiate programs in the Philippines such as BS Nursing.	Academic Acumen
22	I am familiar with the National Nursing Core Competency Standards and try to apply it in my practice whenever applicable.	Academic Acumen
23	Preparing the necessary pieces of evidence for the accreditation of the nursing department comes easy for me.	Administrative Backing
24	I see to it that I treat everyone fairly and with respect, regardless of the cultural and gender differences that I have with them.	Personality and Disposition
25	I understand the faculty recruitment policies and procedures of the institution.	Administrative Backing
26	I can appraise the performance of my faculty objectively and providing them with feedback accordingly.	Leadership Effectiveness
27	I know how determine the needed faculty for the department vis-à-vis the number of students that it has.	Academic Acumen
28	I consider the moral and ethical consequences of my decisions.	Work Ethics
29	I am aware of the tasks that a dean does.	Professional Expertise
30	Trusting others to do their job accordingly comes easy for me.	Leadership Effectiveness
31	I know the vision, mission, and goals of the organization by heart.	Affiliation and Loyalty
32	I have a clear focus on what we need to do as an organization.	Leadership Effectiveness
33	I am confident in my capability to write a formal letter or email.	Professional Expertise
34	I am confident in my capability to speak in public or large groups of people.	Interpersonal Skills

35	I am familiar with the different conflict resolution strategies (e.g., avoiding, competing, comprising, accommodating, and collaborating) and try to apply them in the workplace whenever applicable.	Leadership Effectiveness
36	Prioritizing various work responsibilities and determining what to do first among the many things that I have to do in my work is easy for me.	Personality and Disposition
37	I am capable of empowering others to do the best that they can in their work.	Interpersonal Skills
38	I have been involved in conducting department-led entrepreneurial or income-generating activities.	Administrative Backing
39	I am familiar with most, if not all, of the tasks that a coordinator / supervisor does.	Professional Expertise
40	I have actively engaged myself in community extension services led by the nursing department or the institution.	Administrative Backing
41	I look at challenges as opportunities for growth and development.	Personality and Disposition
42	I consider myself capable of enduring opposition in my work decisions.	Personality and Disposition
43	I try to be as consistent as I can in giving directives to my subordinates.	Leadership Effectiveness
44	I consider myself capable of providing guidance and interpreting the laws and regulations related to department for others.	Academic Acumen
45	I consider myself capable of adapting well to the challenges that I face in my line of work.	Personality and Disposition

### ***Dimensions of the Managerial Readiness Model***

Table 3 reveals the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity, which were formed to ensure that the construct could be tested for factor analysis. Results revealed that the KMO value of this study was 0.607. According to Netemeyer et al. (2003, as cited in Taherdoost et al., 2014), a KMO correlation above 0.60-0.70 is considered adequate for analyzing the EFA output. Hence, a KMO value of 0.607 suggests that the sampling was sufficient for factor analysis.

As for Bartlett's test of sphericity, results revealed a p-value of less than 0.000. This result indicates that the variables are related and are, therefore, suitable for structure detection (IBM, 2016). Generating a significant p-value in this test, Bartlett (1950) claims, indicates that the data have patterned relationships and factorability was assumed.

As a result, considering that the KMO indicated sample adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity also showed that the item correlation matrix was not an identity matrix, the researcher moved forward with the factor analysis.

**Table 3**

*Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test*

Statistical Parameters		Values
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.607
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5033.355
	df	990
	Sig	0.000

### ***Community Estimation***

After determining that the data is suitable for factor analysis, the next step is to estimate communalities, which are initial estimates of the shared variance in each variable. A high extraction communality (close to 1) indicates that the extracted factors explain a large proportion of the variable's variance (Costello & Osborne, 2005). In this analysis, items with high extraction communalities include item 7 (0.835), item 11 (0.860), item 14 (0.867), item 21 (0.915), item 22 (0.863), and item 30 (0.860). These items are well-represented by the extracted factors, suggesting that the factors account for a significant portion of their variance.

Moreover, the items with moderate extraction communalities, where the factors explain a substantial portion of their variance, include: item 1 (0.731), item 5 (0.789), item 6 (0.751), item 8 (0.690), item 9 (0.702), item 10 (0.807), item 12 (0.547), item 15 (0.798), item 16 (0.649), item 17 (0.671), item 18 (0.569), item 19 (0.754), item 20 (0.573), item 23 (0.587), item 24 (0.581), item 26 (0.747), item 28 (0.620), item 29 (0.643), item 33 (0.798), item 34 (0.563), item 36 (0.779), item 37 (0.779), item 38 (0.517), item 41 (0.711), item 42 (0.607), item 43 (0.620), item 45 (0.659). These items have a reasonable amount of variance explained by the factors, indicating that the factors are effective in capturing the underlying structure of these items. Items with low extraction communalities, where the factors explain less variance, include item 3 (0.461), item 32 (0.436), and item 35 (0.475).

Item communalities are considered “high” if they are all 0.8 or greater (Velicer & Fava, 1998, as cited in Costello & Osborne, 2005) – but this is unlikely to occur in real data. More common magnitudes in the social sciences are low to moderate communalities of 0.40 to 0.70. Because of this, all items were considered for continued analysis.

#### ***Derivation of the Number of Factor Structure***

Table 4 compares eigenvalues between those extracted from the researcher's dataset through the principal component analysis and those calculated from the web-based engine as designed by Patil et al. (2008) to determine the number of factors to retain. In other words, the method used to derive the number of factor structures for this study was Horn's parallel analysis (Ledesma & Valero-Mora, 2007). In PA, the number of factors retained is the number of eigenvalues generated from the researcher's dataset that are larger than the corresponding random eigenvalues (Horn, 1965).

As shown in the table, the five factors from the PCA are being compared to the mean eigenvalues generated when 45 variables from the drafted questionnaire were considered and 100 respondents were considered, together with the default (and recommended) values for several random correlation matrices and percentile of eigenvalues which are set at 100 and 95, respectively (Cota et al., 1993). Only five factors were kept out of eleven that had eigenvalues greater than one since only five had a more considerable number of eigenvalues generated from the researcher's dataset than the corresponding random eigenvalues.

**Table 4**

*Parallel Principal Component Analysis of Eigenvalues Using a Web-based Engine.*

Component or Factor	Eigenvalue		Decision
	Random	Researcher's Dataset	
1	2.604864	17.209	Retained
2	2.416351	2.832	Retained
3	2.261325	2.513	Retained
4	2.130729	2.220	Retained
5	2.021635	2.023	Retained
6	1.918920	1.749	Discarded
7	1.829436	1.557	Discarded
8	1.741264	1.464	Discarded



9	1.654146	1.261	Discarded
10	1.583313	1.200	Discarded
11	1.516123	1.041	Discarded

Specifically, it can be gleaned from the table that factors 1 to 5 have the researcher's data set eigenvalues that are greater than the corresponding random eigenvalues, that is, 17.209 > 2.604864 (F1); 2.832 > 2.416351 (F2);... 2.023 > 2.021635 (F5); thus, these factors were retained. At factor 6, the random eigenvalues started to be greater than that of the researcher's data set eigenvalues, 1.749 < 1.918920 (F6); hence, factor 6 and the rest of the succeeding factors were not included (Horn, 1965).

In addition, it can be gleaned in Table 5 the factor loadings from the principal axis factor analysis with Varimax rotation and with Kaiser normalization for a five-factor structure. The results show that the loadings of items in the five factors were above 0.4. Items with loadings below 0.4 were removed as those were considered suppressed factor loadings (Johnson & Stevens, 2001). Of the 45 items in the drafted questionnaire, 26 were retained and spread across the five identified factors.

As revealed in the table, eight items were included in Factor 1 (0.516-0.864), seven items in Factor 2 (0.459-0.739), five items in Factor 3 (0.455-0.772), four items in Factor 4 (0.542-0.675) and two items in Factor 5 (0.790-0.882). It was ensured that, in every item, only one weight or loading was considered to predict each item, as is warranted for "clean" factor analysis. Hence, cross-loadings (not shown in the table) were addressed. The methods used in the study of Stamper and Masterton (2002) were observed to address the cross-loadings. In the study, it was posited that the convention for figuring out cross-loading is to check the difference between the highest and second-highest loading for an item. The item suffers from cross-loading if the absolute difference is less than or equal to 0.2. As a result, such items should be deleted. If it is greater than 0.2, the highest loading may be considered an interpretation factor. This decision to select the highest loading was supported by Hair et al. (1998), who emphasized that if there are cross-loadings, the item that can best represent the factor shall be selected.

Moreover, Table 5 also shows the dimensions' names as determined by the researcher; specifically, Factor 1 was named Leadership and Management Effectiveness, Factor 2 was termed Self-Management (Intrapersonal) Skills, Factor 3 was called Organizational Conversance, Factor 4 was named Administrative Competency, and Factor 5 was termed Legal Acuity.

**Table 5**

*Factor Loadings from Principal Axis Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalization for a Five-Factor Structure*

Items	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
ITEM 14	0.864				
ITEM 15	0.785				
ITEM 05	0.691				
ITEM 02	0.683				
ITEM 38	0.564				
ITEM 08	0.557				
ITEM 17	0.548				
ITEM 23	0.516				
ITEM 43		0.739			

ITEM 41		0.650			
ITEM 42		0.637			
ITEM 45		0.636			
ITEM 18		0.532			
ITEM 40		0.511			
ITEM 39		0.459			
ITEM 10			0.772		
ITEM 11			0.707		
ITEM 09			0.655		
ITEM 16			0.566		
ITEM 25			0.455		
ITEM 01				0.675	
ITEM 32				0.587	
ITEM 30				0.576	
ITEM 24				0.542	
ITEM 21					0.882
ITEM 22					0.790
Eigenvalues	17.209	2.832	2.513	2.220	2.023
% of Variance	38.241	6.294	5.584	4.934	4.496
Dimension Name	Leadership and Management Effectiveness	Self-Management (intrapersonal) Skills	Organizational Conversance	Administrative Competency	Legal Acuity

Factor 1 was termed Leadership and Management Effectiveness because the items under this dimension encapsulated the need for middle-level managers to be well-versed in leadership and managerial functions expected from nursing deans. Factor 2 was named Self-Management (Intrapersonal) Skills because the items under this factor collectively point to the essential personal attributes and traits that a middle-level manager must possess, especially when working in a nursing college. Factor 3 was named Organizational Conversance because the items under this factor collectively point out the need for managers to be acquainted with the culture, policies, and procedures that exist in one's organization, including its vision, mission, and goals. Factor 4 was identified as Administrative Competency because the items under this factor point out the competencies needed for administrators of an academic program. Factor 5 was named Legal Acuity because the items under this factor speak about the need for middle-level academic managers to be familiar with education laws that govern the offering of collegiate programs in the Philippines, such as BS Nursing and the National Nursing Core Competency Standards and try to apply it in my practice whenever applicable.

#### **The Reliability of the Developed Academic Middle-Level Managerial Readiness Scale**

Table 6 shows the reliability coefficients of the dimensions of the survey instrument for the middle-level academic managerial readiness scale in the Philippine nursing colleges. The instrument was evaluated for reliability to determine the internal consistency of items. A separate survey was conducted for this. It can be observed in Table 4 that the reliability of all dimensions was very high, with Cronbach's alpha value above the reliability criteria of 0.792 alpha. The results indicate that the scale has a perfect internal consistency.

**Table 6***Reliability Coefficients of the Dimensions of the Developed Managerial Readiness Scale*

Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Leadership and Management Effectiveness	8	0.765
Self-Management (Intrapersonal) Skills	7	0.845
Organizational Conversance	5	0.813
Administrative Competency	4	0.809
Legal Acuity	2	0.726

### **Valid and Reliable Research Scale for Middle-Level Academic Managerial Readiness Scale in Philippine Colleges of Nursing**

Table 7 revealed the final version of the survey scale for the middle-level academic management scale. Table 4.1 revealed the final version of the survey scale for middle-level academic managerial readiness in the Philippine colleges of nursing, which is the output of the study. The scale consists of 26 items with five dimensions. Specifically, there were eight items for Leadership and Management Effectiveness, seven for Self-Management (Intrapersonal) Skills, five for Organizational Conversance, four for Administrative Competency, and two for Legal Acuity. The respondents were asked to determine the level of their agreement for each item in the checklist using a five-point Likert scale as their options for their responses: 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (moderately agree), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree).

**Table 7***Valid and Reliable Research Scale for Middle-Level Academic Managerial Readiness in Philippine Colleges of Nursing*

<b>Managerial Readiness Indicators</b>	
<b>I</b>	<b>Leadership and Management Effectiveness</b>
1	I know what capital and operational expenses are and where the funds for such expenses for the department are sourced from.
2	I am familiar with the process of making financial plans for the operations of the department.
3	I am familiar with most, if not all, of the tasks that a coordinator / supervisor does.
4	I believe that I have garnered the necessary educational qualifications and trainings necessitated to become a dean.
5	I have been involved in conducting department-led entrepreneurial or income-generating activities.
6	I am well-aware of what strategic planning is and how to do it for the nursing department or college of nursing.
7	I know how to develop and present reports on plans, policies, actions, and results of the college.
8	Preparing the necessary pieces of evidence for the accreditation of the nursing department comes easy for me.
<b>II</b>	<b>Self-management (Intrapersonal) Skills</b>
9	I try to be as consistent as I can in giving directives to my subordinates.
10	I look at challenges as opportunities for growth and development.

11	I consider myself capable of enduring opposition in my work decisions.
12	I consider myself capable of adapting well to the challenges that I face in my line of work.
13	I consider myself capable of providing guidance and interpreting the laws and regulations related to department for others.
14	Prioritizing various work responsibilities and determining what to do first among the many things that I have to do in my work is easy for me.
15	I see to it that I treat everyone fairly and with respect, regardless of the cultural and gender differences that I have with them.
<b>III</b>	<b>Organizational Conversance</b>
16	I know the vision, mission, and goals of the organization by heart.
17	I am familiar with the culture of the organization that I am currently in.
18	I have been with the institution for quite some time already, enough to say that I am familiar with the institution.
19	Preparing weekly and/or monthly reports of my accomplishments comes easy for me.
20	I understand the faculty recruitment policies and procedures of the institution.
<b>IV</b>	<b>Administrative Competency</b>
21	I consider myself to be productive in research, production, extension, and instruction.
22	I have a clear focus on what we need to do as an organization.
23	Trusting others to do their job accordingly comes easy for me.
24	I am familiar with the protocol of resolving issues in my work involving student and faculty discipline.
<b>V</b>	<b>Legal Acuity</b>
25	I am well-acquainted with the education laws that govern the offering of collegiate programs in the Philippines such as BS Nursing.
26	I am familiar with the National Nursing Core Competency Standards and try to apply it in my practice whenever applicable.

The respondents' readiness is then measured through the average of the scores. This average is interpreted using the following readiness scale: 1.00 to 1.80 (very low), 1.81 to 2.60 (low), 2.61 to 3.40 (moderate), 3.41 to 4.20 (high), and 4.21 to 5.00 (very high). The instrument was evaluated for reliability to determine the internal consistency of items. The reliability of all dimensions was high, with Cronbach's alpha value above the reliability criteria of about 0.792 alpha. The results indicate that the scale has a very high internal consistency.

## Discussion

The study highlights the lived experiences of middle-level academic managers in Philippine nursing colleges, including the struggle for managerial skills enhancement, nurturing managerial and supervision competence, and promoting nursing education nobility. These managers manage various roles, such as academics, research, faculty activities, student affairs, and communication. The ambiguity of their duties and functions, as well as the need for a uniform definition of academic middle management, contribute to the difficulties faced by deans. This reflects what several authors state about middle-level management in nursing education (Frosch-Erickson, 2018; Mintz-Binder, 2014; Nguyen, 2013).

Deans are also seen at the center of the organizational structure. While the "middleness" puts them in a strategic position in the organization because it allows them to connect with people

from different levels, informants purport that this also puts deans in a precarious position because their middle position and the multiplicity of roles and demands usually lead to confusion – as was reflected in several studies (Nilsson & Svensson, 2016). Deans are caught in conflicting cultures, pressures, and priorities. Constrained by the role's traditions and conflicts, they are increasingly held accountable for consequences over which they have little influence or control (Gallos, 2011; McErlane, 2014; Pham et al., 2019; Reichert, 2016). This is a sobering reality that deans often face in their profession. So, it is no surprise that the informants stated that deans must be nurtured to handle these complex aspects of being middle-level academic managers.

To develop managerial and supervisory competence, deans should refine their skills, value experience, and strengthen their support system. Several studies support this (Blass, 2011; Lindstrom, 2019; McErlane, 2014; Rodgers, 2019). This involves learning the roles and responsibilities of a middle-level manager, advancing their career through formal education and training, seminars, and workshops, and developing leadership and management skills. Experience-based wisdom, personal dynamics, and workplace politics skills are also essential. Building competency requires seeking top management's help, acknowledging colleagues' and subordinates' support, and securing family support.

However, notwithstanding the challenges, some informants still find the pressure associated with the dean position rewarding and consider it a privilege, as in other studies (Gallos, 2011; McErlane, 2014). Deans of nursing have a unique position to influence nursing education and practice, affecting students and the next generation of practitioners. To prepare for the dean position, admitting that the role may be challenging but not impossible is essential. Adopting a mindset that views obstacles as opportunities for growth, being receptive to learning, and having a vision for one's future promotes growth and personal development. Recognizing one's skills and shortcomings is crucial for becoming a successful middle-level academic manager (Blass, 2011; Burlingame, 2016; Lindstrom, 2019).

Self-awareness is also crucial for academic managers to function effectively. It involves analyzing one's strengths and weaknesses, focusing on areas for growth, and understanding one's leadership style. For the informants of this study, successful deans are aware of their leadership style and regularly assess circumstances and behavior for leadership development. They recognize their beliefs, objectives, and alignment with the nursing academy's mission – important traits mentioned in several studies (Gunsalus et al., 2019; Reed, 2017; Wepner et al., 2015; White, 2014).

All these discussions about the lived experiences of the informants as deans of nursing underscore the next set of themes explored in this study: the dimensions of managerial readiness. The underlying dimensions of managerial readiness uncovered from this study included professional expertise, work ethics, leadership effectiveness, intrapersonal skills, affiliation and loyalty, personality and disposition, academic acumen, and administrative backing.

As viewed by the informants, academic middle managers must possess professional expertise or a high level of ability to apply academic methods, publish research findings, stay up to date with their field, and actively participate in the educational community. They must also demonstrate various capabilities to fulfill established expectations, such as transitioning between roles, communicating in multiple languages, negotiating with peers, and maintaining openness, honesty, and integrity. Work ethics is another crucial domain of managerial readiness, as it requires a high level of professionalism, a deep understanding of tasks, and perseverance in performing tasks. Leadership effectiveness is another domain of managerial readiness, as it involves managing a team, trusting employees, communicating with and empowering them, delegating responsibilities, and confronting issues. Intrapersonal skills are also essential for effective leadership, as they form the foundation of one's development. The study also found that having the right mindset, which includes the personality traits and dispositions necessary for middle-level academic management, is another category of management readiness (Bobe & Kober, 2018; Bowker, 1982; Burlingame, 2016; Ehrenstorfer et al., 2015; Pham et al., 2019; *The European Business Review*, 2020; Walker, 2019).

Informants also identified affiliation and loyalty as ideal for a middle-level academic manager in a nursing college. Affiliation refers to the degree of knowledge of the university's organization and operations, while loyalty implies commitment to the institution's mission and vision. To become an effective middle-level manager, one must have ample experience with the job and the institution (Bowker, 1982; Ehrenstorfer et al., 2015; The European Business Review, 2020; Walker, 2019).

Academic acumen is another crucial factor. Apart from these factors, academic acumen was also recognized as an essential dimension of managerial readiness. Academic acumen comprises proficiency in academic procedures, publishing research findings, staying current in nursing, maintaining a positive academic reputation, and being actively involved in the academic community. Academic acumen entails familiarity with the legislative framework guiding the provision of nursing education in the Philippines. This includes comprehending the education legislation, CHED's rules, regulations, recommendations for the BS Nursing Program, and the stipulations for nursing education established in the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002. Most deans agree that a thorough understanding of education legislation is critical for planning, developing, and implementing policies for the nursing department, as well as the decision-making that occurs because of such an activity—a fact that is supported by several studies (The European Business Review, 2020; Walker, 2019).

Administrative backing is another factor that affects managerial preparedness. It refers to the organizational know-how of aspiring deans and the level of support available from their administrators. With organizational knowledge, managers may be able to identify themselves as part of the company and manage the department they oversee. The influence of administrative backing on the assumption of roles of deans or middle-level academic managers has been supported by several studies (Simmons, 2017).

Lastly, seeing readiness among deans in a more practical sense, the informants stated that, apart from meeting the expectations set from the dimensions of managerial readiness, strategic succession planning and management practices are required to prepare nursing middle-level, academic managers better. With this, people primed for the deanship may be able to fulfill such a designation (Tucker, 2020; Ocho et al., 2020). Bormann (2018) states that succession planning may be accomplished by providing chances for nursing leaders and deans to meet regularly, developing training on specific themes, and establishing a formal mentoring program. While the informants' lack of access to professional development and training opportunities was not a factor in their resignations, they made these recommendations proactively to increase networking, collegial support, and confidence.

A valid managerial scale was developed in the quantitative phase of this study. The integration involved using the qualitative results to build a new quantitative feature grounded in the informants' lived experiences. The factor structure of the managerial readiness scale showed that the codes on professional expertise, work ethics, leadership effectiveness, intrapersonal skills, and affiliation and loyalty were confirmed as reflected in their respective latent factor loadings. The items of this scale were validated by research experts and were found to have high reliability and perfect internal consistency.

### ***Limitations of the Study***

The findings of this exploratory sequential study shed light on the managerial readiness among middle-level academic managers in Philippine nursing colleges. As readers delve into the implications of this research, it is crucial to exercise caution when generalizing the results beyond the scope of this study. While the findings of this study offer valuable insights into the managerial readiness of this specific group, it is essential to recognize the limitations inherent in its methodology and sample.

Firstly, the sample size in this study was relatively modest, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of academic managers in nursing colleges across the Philippines. Additionally, the study was conducted in a specific cultural and institutional context, which may influence the transferability of the results to other settings. Most informants in

the qualitative phase came from private higher education institutions (HEIs). Considering the nuanced differences in nursing deanship in the public vs. private sector, the findings of this study may be more reflective of the experiences of those working in private HEIs. The utilization of videoconferencing for data collection may potentially restrict the scope of data interpretation due to the incomplete observation of non-verbal cues or body language. Furthermore, the quantitative phase only included a sample size of 100 individuals to conduct exploratory factor analysis. Although specific research supports the adequacy of this number for analysis, other studies indicate the necessity of a higher number, emphasizing the importance of additional testing to verify the scale's practical use.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the existing literature in several meaningful ways. One of the strengths of this study lies in its mixed-methods approach, which allowed for a comprehensive exploration of managerial readiness by combining qualitative insights from interviews with quantitative survey data. This methodological triangulation enhanced the validity and richness of the findings, providing a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing managerial readiness in this context.

Furthermore, this study addresses a gap in the literature by focusing specifically on middle-level academic managers in nursing colleges. It provides valuable insights that can inform organizational policies and practices to enhance these institutions' leadership development and capacity-building initiatives.

## Conclusions

All in all, being a middle-level academic manager is a challenging designation to fill in. The job description of being one may need to be clarified. The position may also be laden with several challenges, as is expected for a designation that places a person in the jaws of conflicting demands from the upper management, the rank-and-file personnel, and, by extension, the other stakeholders in the organization – students, parents, and department partners alike. All these issues require attention – a requirement that those in this position actively seek to cultivate their expertise in the practice of their profession as deans. This necessitates them, then, to hone their skills by becoming familiar with the roles and functions of a middle-level manager and the scope of their practice as one, by improving themselves as a middle-level academic manager through formal education and participation in learning opportunities that hone one's leadership, management, and administrative skillsets. For the informants, this effort should entail developing professional expertise, strengthening work ethics, enhancing intrapersonal skills, and being closely affiliated and loyal to one's organization.

Additionally, this situation necessitates that these deans value wisdom gained through experience, emphasizing the significance of years of expertise as a teacher, as well as years of experience as a coordinator or supervisor; gaining wisdom through a thorough understanding of the institution with which one is linked, including its people and culture; making personal, internal changes to the middle-level academic managership; and acquiring the ability to cope with workplace politics.

Moreover, this experience has taught these deans to enhance their support systems, solicit assistance from superiors and subordinates when necessary, and seek validation and support from their families. Deanship is complex, and its workload is substantial, if not overbearing, but the deans stated that work becomes manageable with the support of colleagues and family.

Furthermore, the deans also saw the need to embrace adversities as opportunities for professional growth and to acknowledge one's strengths and weaknesses in the practice of one's role as a middle-level academic manager, especially in a college of nursing where the challenges seem to be never-ending, as is expected from a course that deals with taking care of another human being. Deans need to accept that, while it is true that the position is highly challenging, this hardship is just a phase, and despite its challenges, being designated as one is a fulfilling position. In addition, learning

about oneself and having a personal goal are also seen as essential elements in becoming a successful middle-level academic manager. Hence, self-awareness must be developed among the persons in this position. Doing these is necessary to become effective in one's role as a middle-level academic manager that will pave the way for deans to take pride in their accomplishments, to leave a legacy or "make a difference" for the department, and to promote the nobility of the nursing education profession.

## **Implications**

The study has shed light on the informants' lived experiences as middle-level academic managers in Philippine nursing colleges and the understanding that managerial readiness can be assessed by considering leadership and management effectiveness, self-management or intrapersonal skills, organizational conversance, administrative competency, and legal insight. Because of this, the researcher suggests that aspiring middle-level academic managers should be given opportunities to develop and enhance their management and supervisory abilities. This may enable individuals to acquire knowledge through practical application or experiential learning and apply their conceptual understanding of deanship or middle-level academic managership. It is advisable to offer middle-level academic managers opportunities for professional growth, such as a faculty development program that includes formal education and participation in training, seminars, and workshops. Considering this, it is advisable to improve the effectiveness of a faculty development plan and succession program for middle-level academic managers. The establishment of monthly meetings for nursing deans, the development of specialized training programs, and the establishment of a formal mentorship initiative may achieve the implementation of succession planning.

Furthermore, given the high validity and reliability scores of the developed research instrument, the researcher suggests that school administrators and human resource officers utilize this scale to evaluate the readiness of their faculty members for middle-level academic management positions. By doing this, they may determine the applicants' preparedness for managing roles and pinpoint the areas that require improvement for those they plan to appoint as middle-level academic managers in their nursing colleges. The prospective middle-level managers themselves might utilize this scale for the same objectives.

Lastly, since a scale was developed in this study, the researcher recommends that a confirmatory factor analysis for this scale be conducted. This is suggested to ensure that the final dimensions, including the representation of items to their factor, have a good fit.

## **Conflict of Interest**

None

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## Authors' Contribution

Dr. Blaise Nieve conceived the presented idea, carried out the data gathering, analyzed the qualitative and quantitative results of the study in consultation with a qualitative data analyst and statistician, respectively, and wrote the entire manuscript. Dr. Felix Chavez, Jr. verified the statistical approach, conducted the statistical analysis, and supervised the implementation of the study.

## Data Availability Statement

The data collected during our study is available for analysis within a 5-year window from the completion of the research. After this period, access to the data will no longer be provided due to confidentiality and data retention policies.

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