



**ENHANCING NURSES' ETHICAL KNOWLEDGE IN HOSPITALS THROUGH THE INITIATION OF NURSING ETHIC NAVIGATION AND A NURSES' ETHICAL GUIDELINE E-BOOK**

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**ABSTRACT**

Nurses in hospitals often face complex ethical situations; however, there are still gaps in the understanding and application of nursing ethical principles, and a structured, easily accessible ethical guideline is not yet available. This study aims to develop two main solutions Nursing Ethic Navigation (an ethical guideline web search engine) and the Nurses' Ethical Guideline E-Book using John Kotter's Eight-Step Change Model approach. The method used is a case study conducted at Hospital X during September–October 2024, encompassing problem identification, action planning, implementation, and evaluation. The respondents in this study were the Head Nurse, Primary Nurse, Nursing Department staff, members of the Nursing Committee, and nurses in the IGD-COT unit at Hospital X. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and questionnaires, then analyzed using problem priority scoring and a fishbone diagram to identify root causes as the basis for developing action plans and change strategies. The results showed a significant improvement in nurses' knowledge, awareness, and ability to apply ethical principles after the intervention. Digital media such as the e-book and web-based tools proved effective as learning platforms and practical references that can be accessed anytime. This study recommends expanding the implementation of ethical guidelines to other service units, supported by managerial involvement and continuous evaluation, to ensure integration into the organizational culture and daily nursing practice.

Keywords: e-book; ethics; guideline; nurse; nursing

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**INTRODUCTION**

Ethical issues in nursing practice are a critical concern that demands serious attention, given that nurses are on the front lines of patient care and are frequently confronted with clinical situations filled with ethical dilemmas (Wang, 2022). A study conducted by Güllü & Kanadlı (2025) found that integrating ethics education into nursing curricula has a positive impact on nurses' perception of professional values. However, studies also show that many nurses still lack adequate ethical competence. For instance, Maluwa et al. (2022) reported that 57% of nurses had a low level of ethical competence. The complexity of ethical challenges is further heightened by social change, advances in medical technology, rising awareness of individual rights, and the diversity of values and cultures in healthcare settings (Katayama et al., 2022; Koirala, Davidson, & Rushton, 2022). This situation requires nurses not only to understand ethical principles but also to

be able to apply them appropriately in daily practice. Therefore, strong ethical knowledge is an essential component for nurses—not only to maintain professionalism and service quality but also to protect patient rights and safety comprehensively (Susmarini et al., 2023). It is thus necessary to identify existing gaps in practice, such as those revealed by an assessment conducted at Hospital X, in order to better understand the challenges in applying nursing ethics.

The assessment at Hospital X revealed significant challenges in the implementation of ethical practices by nurses. Interviews with the Heads of the Emergency Room (ER) and Central Operating Theatre (COT), Nursing Division, and Nursing Committee indicated that while the hospital refers to the Indonesian National Nurses Association (PPNI) Code of Ethics, there is no specific Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) or structured guideline outlining concrete steps for addressing ethical dilemmas. Additionally, although the nursing committee includes an ethics division, a systematic team to manage ethical issues in nursing services has not been established. A survey of 40 nurses showed that 100% of respondents had encountered ethical dilemmas in practice, yet none could correctly state the core nursing ethical principles. Observations in the ER and COT indicated that although 75% of nurses received direction from unit heads to apply ethical principles, 25% still demonstrated inconsistency, such as failing to explain procedures to patients. Only 60% of nurses reported having received comprehensive ethics orientation, while the remaining 40% stated they had insufficient understanding of ethical practice in daily care. This reflects a significant gap in ethical knowledge and internalization among nurses. While efforts such as routine orientation and supervisor instructions are in place, they are not sufficient to ensure uniform understanding and consistent ethical practice across all service units. This indicates suboptimal planning in ethical management, particularly in providing accessible and easy-to-understand ethical guidelines for all nursing staff. As a result, the assessment findings underscore the need for a clear ethical guideline to help nurses understand and apply ethical principles effectively, while also optimizing the manager's role in guiding ethical nursing practices.

An integrated ethical behavior guideline, including ethical dilemma handling flowcharts and a monitoring system, is urgently needed so that nurses have a clear reference when facing ethical situations. A clear ethical guideline in hospitals can support nurses in making appropriate decisions during difficult clinical scenarios, thus promoting ethical and professional nursing care (Dierckx de Casterlé et al., 2008). Nursing ethical guidelines in hospitals are typically based on national or international nursing codes of ethics, which emphasize core values such as autonomy, justice, beneficence, and non-maleficence (ICN, 2021). Therefore, ethical guidelines are essential to support nurses in delivering services. In addition, compliance with professionalism as reflected in the application of ethical principles is a critical factor in the development of nursing competence. According to a systematic review, competence development is an ongoing process influenced by six main factors, including adherence to professionalism and nurses' critical attitudes in practice (Rizany, Hariyati, & Handiyani, 2017). Thus, ethical guidelines not only facilitate ethical decision-making but also directly contribute to the comprehensive enhancement of nurses' professional competence.

To address the ethical knowledge gap among nurses, this study aims to develop a solution in the form of Nursing Ethic Navigation—a web-based system that provides interactive ethical guidance—and a nursing ethics e-book accessible to all nursing personnel. This initiative is designed as part of a planned change strategy using John Kotter's change theory, which emphasizes the importance of building urgency, forming a guiding

coalition, and creating a sustainable vision and strategy for organizational change (Marquis & Huston, 2021). Through this approach, it is expected that nurses' ethical knowledge and awareness will increase, ultimately improving the overall quality of nursing care. The digital ethics guideline not only serves as a decision-support tool but also as a platform for continuous learning that adapts to the dynamic nature of ethical challenges in the field. This study also measures changes in nurses' ethical knowledge before and after the program implementation as part of evaluating the intervention's effectiveness. This study aims to develop two main solutions Nursing Ethic Navigation (an ethical guideline web search engine) and the Nurses' Ethical Guideline E-Book using John Kotter's Eight-Step Change Model approach.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this study was a case report conducted at Hospital X during the period from September 2 to October 2, 2024. The activities followed several stages based on John Kotter's Eight-Step Change Model. The process began with problem identification, data analysis, prioritization of issues, and presentation of assessment results to create a sense of urgency. Data collection was carried out through interviews with the Head Nurse, Primary Nurse, Nursing Division, and Nursing Committee, direct field observations, and questionnaires distributed to nurses in the ER-COT service units. The collected data were then analyzed using a problem prioritization scoring method together with the nursing team at Hospital X, which revealed that one of the main issues was the suboptimal planning function in managing ethical behavior in the hospital. Root cause analysis was conducted using a fishbone diagram, mapping contributing factors from planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling aspects. An ethics nurse ambassador team was then formed to act as the guiding coalition. This was followed by the development of a Plan of Action (PoA) and the formulation of a clear ethical behavior guideline, which was communicated through various media such as ebooks, web platforms, and discussion forums. Barriers to implementation were addressed by providing support and training. To maintain momentum, small achievements were celebrated as short-term wins, which were then consolidated to ensure long-term and sustainable change. Finally, an evaluation and follow-up plan were carried out to ensure that the ethical behavior guideline becomes an integrated part of the organizational culture at Hospital X.

## **RESULT**

The results of implementing the development of Nursing Ethic Navigation and the nursing ethics guideline e-book at Hospital X are presented according to the stages of change outlined in John Kotter's Eight-Step Change Model. Each step reflects the transformation process carried out to address the ethical knowledge gap among nurses, starting from the creation of urgency to the evaluation of change. The outcomes of this structured approach, which actively involved nurses and nursing management, showed a significant contribution to improving the understanding and application of ethical principles in daily nursing practice. The first stage of change—Creating a Sense of Urgency—was achieved by presenting the assessment results. The assessment was conducted using three methods: interviews, questionnaires, and observations. Interviews were conducted from September 2 to 11, 2024, involving the Head Nurses of the Emergency Room (ER) and Central Operating Theatre (COT), the Nursing Division, and the Nursing Committee of Hospital X. Interviews followed a pre-prepared question guide focusing on the roles and functions of nursing management in enhancing nurses' ethical competence. Questionnaires were distributed to all Primary Nurses (PN) and Associate Nurses (AN) working in the ER and COT, with a total of 40 respondents. Questionnaire completion was carried out between September 10 and 11, 2024.

Observations were conducted from September 2 to 11, 2024, focusing on the role and function of unit heads in managing nurses' ethical behavior, as well as the actual application of ethical behavior by nurses during nursing care.

Table of Respondents' Distribution by Gender, Education, Position, Competency Level, and Length of Work (n=40)

No	Characteristics	n (%)	No	Characteristics	n (%)	No
1	Gender		4	Competency Level		1
	Male	10 (25)		Don't Remember	3 (7.5)	
	Female	30 (75)		PK 2A	16 (40)	
2	Age		5	PK 2B	13 (32.5)	2
	24	2 (5)		PK 2C	3 (7.5)	
	25	5 (12.5)		PK 3A	3 (7.5)	
	26	2 (5)		PK 3B	2 (5)	
	27	10 (25)		Length of Work		
	28	8 (20)		Less than 1 year	1 (2.5)	
	29	7 (17.5)		1 year	2 (5)	
	31	2 (5)		2 years	5 (12.5)	
	33	4 (10)		3 years	9 (22.5)	
	3	Position				
PN		7 (17.5)	5 years	5 (12)		

The results of implementing the Nursing Ethic Navigation and the nursing ethics guideline e-book at Hospital X are presented according to the stages of change from John Kotter's Eight-Step Change Model. Each step reflects the structured transformation aimed at closing the gap in nurses' ethical knowledge, starting from creating urgency to anchoring the change in the hospital culture. The results indicate that a structured approach, involving active participation from nurses and nursing management, significantly contributed to improving the understanding and application of ethical principles in everyday nursing practice. The first step, Create a Sense of Urgency, was achieved by presenting assessment results. This assessment was conducted through interviews, questionnaires, and direct observations. Interviews (September 2–11, 2024) involved the Head Nurses of the Emergency Room (ER) and Central Operating Theatre (COT), Nursing Division, and Nursing Committee. The focus was on nursing management's role in enhancing ethical competence. A questionnaire was distributed to 40 nurses (Primary and Associate Nurses) working in ER and COT (September 10–11, 2024). Observations assessed unit heads' roles in managing ethical behavior and nurses' ethical conduct in service delivery.

Following data collection, a SWOT analysis was conducted, revealing that the planning function for ethical behavior management at Hospital X was suboptimal. The second step, Create a Guiding Coalition, involved forming an Ethics Ambassador Team, composed of members from various nursing departments. This team was responsible for leading the change and engaging all nursing staff in the implementation of ethical guidelines. The third step, Create a Vision for Change, involved developing a Plan of Action (PoA) and drafting ethical behavior guidelines in collaboration with stakeholders to ensure the content is practical and relevant. The fourth step, Communicate the Vision, was implemented through the distribution of the e-book, launching the Nursing Ethics web platform, and holding forums and discussions to help nurses understand and apply the guidelines. The fifth step, Remove Obstacles, addressed barriers such as low ethical understanding through training and mentoring. Ethics ambassadors ensured accessibility to the digital guidelines anytime via web and e-book.

The sixth step, Create Short-Term Wins, celebrated early successes, such as the successful launch and use of the Nursing Ethic web search engine as a reference tool for resolving

ethical dilemmas. This demonstrated improved accessibility to ethical guidance. The seventh step, Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change, included an evaluation of the implementation. Initially, none of the 38 nurses (0%) could correctly name ethical principles. After the pre-test, 69.2% showed improvement. Post-training, 85.7% of nurses could correctly identify ethical principles. Evaluation of responses to ethical dilemma scenarios also showed improvement across all five questions—Q1, Q2, Q4, and Q5 increased from 92.5% to 100%, while Q3 rose from 82.5% to 92.5%. These outcomes confirmed the effectiveness of the ethical guideline training.

The eighth step, Anchor the Changes in Corporate Culture, ensured that ethical behavior became embedded in the hospital's organizational culture. A follow-up action plan was developed, integrating the guidelines and ambassador program into Hospital X's systems so that ethical principles are not merely formal requirements but part of daily nursing practice. The evaluation of the nursing ethics strengthening program at Hospital X included five key activities. The Nursing Ethic Navigation initiative at Hospital X has demonstrated tangible progress through several impactful activities. First, the Nursing Ethics Ambassador Team was established, comprising representatives from various departments to ensure the sustainability of the program. The Nursing Ethics Guideline E-Book reached 90% completion, offering practical guidance on addressing ethical dilemmas, with the remaining work focused on the formal legalization process. Similarly, the development of the Nursing Ethic Web Search Engine also achieved 90% completion, designed to function as a digital support tool for ethical decision-making. To promote these tools, a socialization session involving representatives from all units was conducted, showing a notable increase in nurses' ethical knowledge as reflected in improved pre- and post-test scores. Furthermore, web simulations and the installation of informative posters in service areas received positive feedback from nurses, who appreciated the practical value of these resources. Collectively, these five initiatives highlight the real impact of the Nursing Ethic Navigation efforts in enhancing ethical awareness and application among nursing staff at Hospital X.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Development of the Nursing Ethics Guideline E-Book and Nursing Ethic Navigation at Hospital X focuses on innovative solutions designed to address the issue of low ethical competence among nurses. Nurses face various ethical challenges due to changes in the social environment, such as advancements in medical technology, growing awareness of individual rights, and the diversification of values (Katayama et al., 2022). In this context, the implementation of the Nursing Ethics Guideline E-Book and Nursing Ethic Navigation aims to provide nurses with quick and easy access to relevant guidance, enabling them to make informed decisions based on nursing ethical principles. The use of digital platforms such as e-books and web search engines in nursing education aligns with research suggesting that technology can enhance healthcare workers' understanding of complex concepts, including ethics. Online platforms have been shown to improve ethical decision-making and critical thinking skills among nurses; however, studies note the need for further quality development (Zhen et al., 2022). Similarly, research by Jones et al. (2022) indicates that the development and implementation of online learning platforms can enhance nurses' ethical decision-making and critical thinking abilities. Thus, technology plays a supportive role in ethical guidance.

The implementation process at Hospital X adopted John Kotter's Eight-Step Change Model, which has proven effective in healthcare institutional change management. The first stage, creating a sense of urgency, was conducted by presenting assessment results that revealed a low level of understanding of nursing ethics among nurses. This stage was crucial for raising awareness about the importance of improving ethical competence. The next step, building a

guiding coalition, involved stakeholders across the hospital, including nursing management, who led the change and ensured effective implementation of the ethical guideline. This approach is consistent with the findings of Ravi et al. (2022), who applied Kotter's model to manage protocol changes in COVID-19 screening in emergency units, resulting in improved operational efficiency and staff engagement. Similarly, Haas et al. (2020) reported that applying the model in reforming emergency medicine residency curricula significantly enhanced participant engagement and satisfaction. Additionally, Campbell (2008) emphasized that Kotter's model provides a systematic framework for managing organizational change, focusing on the emotional and situational aspects of transformation.

In the creating a vision for change stage, the ethics guideline was designed in an accessible and comprehensible format. Ethical guidelines are vital components for improving the quality of nursing care (Toumova et al., 2021), and in this case, were implemented via an e-book and web platform. The next step involved communicating the vision to all nurses through the dissemination of the e-book and web guide, aimed at ensuring that each nurse understood how to apply the guidelines in daily decision-making. Evaluation results showed a significant improvement in nurses' understanding of ethical principles post-implementation. Pre-test results showed that only 69.2% of nurses could correctly identify ethical principles, while post-test results rose to 85.7%. These findings indicate that this technology-based ethical guideline program effectively enhances healthcare professionals' ethical competence, particularly in managing clinical dilemmas. This aligns with a study by Zia et al. (2023), which demonstrated that professional ethics education using problem-based learning and reflective practice improves moral sensitivity among nursing students. Furthermore, research by Bordbar et al. (2024) found that enhanced critical thinking skills contribute to improved moral courage and sensitivity among nurses, ultimately strengthening their ethical decision-making capacity. Therefore, the integration of technology in ethical guidance is expected to reinforce nurses' ethical competence at Hospital X.

The next stage, removing obstacles, addressed challenges such as nurses' limited understanding of ethical principles by providing training and mentorship. This supports the findings of Andersson et al. (2022), which showed that ethics competency learning is beneficial for both healthcare workers and students in identifying previously unrecognized ethical issues. Ethics ambassadors played a key role in ensuring that the guidelines were accessible via digital platforms, allowing nurses to consult them at any time and accelerating the adoption of ethical principles. The subsequent stage, creating short-term wins, was aimed at maintaining momentum by celebrating early achievements. The successful launch and use of the "Nursing Ethic" web search engine as a reference platform for handling ethical dilemmas exemplified improved accessibility and facilitated faster and more accurate decision-making in complex clinical scenarios. Poikkeus et al. (2014) emphasized the vital role of nursing leaders in supporting ethical competence through performance evaluation and ongoing training. Moreover, the ADDIE-based ethics education program developed by Kim et al. (2020) was shown to enhance nurses' confidence, ethical competence, and moral sensitivity—supporting the effectiveness of similar interventions at Hospital X.

In the consolidate gains and produce more change phase, Hospital X conducted periodic evaluations to ensure that changes in ethical behavior among nurses were on track. The final step, anchoring changes in corporate culture, aimed to embed ethical behavior into the organizational culture at Hospital X. The integration of the ethics guideline and ambassador roles into the hospital system reinforced a commitment to ethical practice in daily nursing services. Mount and Anderson (2015) noted that when nursing leaders develop change management skills, they can better support staff through clinical practice changes and

professional development. Further, research by Lotfi et al. (2018) showed that ethical leadership positively influences nurses' organizational commitment and perceptions of patient safety culture, contributing to better service quality. Levine et al. (2020) also highlighted that a positive organizational culture encourages nurses to be more proactive in reporting medical errors—an essential indicator of a strong ethical culture. Therefore, the development of this ethical guideline not only enhances nurses' competencies but also strengthens the ethical culture at Hospital X, making ethical principles an integral part of everyday nursing practice.

## **CONCLUSION**

Strengthening the ethical competence of nurses is essential to face the increasingly complex challenges of nursing practice. The assessment results at RS X indicate a gap in the understanding and application of ethical principles, thus requiring a systematic solution. This study shows that the development of Nursing Ethic Navigation and an ethics guide e-book based on Kotter's change model can improve nurses' knowledge and ability to make ethical decisions. Through steps such as assessment, the formation of ethics ambassadors, training, and evaluation, behavioral changes occurred, which not only impacted individuals but also became part of the organizational culture. This digital solution has proven effective in assisting nurses in daily practice and promoting the creation of a sustainable ethical culture in the hospital.

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