

Factors Affecting the Delivery of Quality Nursing Care and the Clinical Competencies of Newly Hired Nurses in Selected Hospitals in Quezon City: Basis for Enhancement of Orientation Program.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the factors affecting the clinical competencies of newly hired nurses in selected hospitals in Quezon City and their relationship with competency levels. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data from 50 newly hired nurses were analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Findings showed that nurses demonstrated a very high level of clinical competence (WM = 4.21), with workplace and organizational factors strongly influencing competency development (WM = 4.41). Confidence, resource availability, adequate staffing, and support from senior nurses were identified as key contributors. A significant positive relationship was found between workplace factors and clinical competency ($r = 0.49$, $p = 0.006$), highlighting the importance of structured orientation, mentorship, and continuous learning programs in strengthening nurses' skills and improving patient care.

Keywords: *Newly hired nurses; Clinical competency; Quality nursing care; Workplace factors; Hospital orientation program; Professional development.*

INTRODUCTION

Newly hired nurses struggle with clinical decision-making and adjusting to the demands of professional practice even though these individuals are vital to quality patient care. Various studies indicate that novice nurses' ability to become competent can be enhanced by competency-based orientation, mentors, and positive practice environments (Weller-Newton et al., 2022; Van Hecke et al., 2025). However, there is a dearth of Philippine studies exploring how workplace issues relate to clinical competency. This study was conducted to evaluate the competence of newly hired nurses, determine the factors associated with their clinical performance, test the associations among variables for possible implications for the improvement of a hospital's orientation program, and enhance quality patient care.

Statement of the Problem

The study sought to determine the factors influencing clinical competence of new graduate nurses. Specifically, the researcher sought answers to the following sub-problems:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, areas of assignment, and length of service?
2. What is the extent of competencies of newly hired nurses towards quality nursing care in the hospitals of Quezon City?
3. What are the factors affecting the competencies of newly hired nurses towards quality nursing care in the hospitals of Quezon City?
4. Is there a significant relationship between factors affecting competency and the level of competency of newly hired nurses?

Scope and Delimitations

This study sought to evaluate the clinical and professional competencies of newly hired nurses at selected hospitals in Quezon City to inform an enhanced orientation program. It seeks to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, assess competency levels in ten key areas of nursing practice, elicit and measure influencing factors, and to identify the relationship between influencing factors and competency levels. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data are collected from 50 newly hired nurses with 0-12 months of clinical experience via a locally adopted, standardized questionnaire.

Review of Related Literatures

Newly employed nurses must develop their competence as they transition from academic learning to clinical practice to ensure quality and safe patient care. Various studies have identified that clinical competence and a successful transition to professional nursing practice could be fostered through well-organized orientation, preceptorship, supportive workplace settings, and professional growth (Mugerwa et al., 2022). Also, Gadin (2024) highlighted the importance of organizational support, orientation, and training programs in addressing the learning needs and transition barriers of newly employed Filipino nurses.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored in Benner's Novice-to-Expert Theory (1982), which explains that nurses progressively develop competence through education, clinical exposure, and professional experience, and is supported by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1977), which emphasizes that learning occurs through observation, interaction, and self-efficacy within supportive environments. Donabedian's Quality-of-Care Framework (1966) further explains that organizational structure, clinical processes, and patient outcomes collectively influence healthcare quality, while the Rochester Competency Model identifies the essential competencies expected of professional nurses.

Conceptual Framework

The study adopted an IV-DV model in which factors affecting competency served as the independent variables, and the competency level of newly hired nurses was the dependent variable. Workplace support, educational preparation, clinical experience, organizational resources, and individual readiness were examined as determinants of competency. The findings served as the basis for developing recommendations to enhance hospital orientation programs and strengthen competency development among newly hired nurses.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach guided by the **Independent Variable–Dependent Variable (IV–DV) conceptual framework**, where the factors affecting newly hired nurses' competencies served as the independent variables and clinical competency as the dependent variable. A validated questionnaire and statistical analyses were used to examine the relationship between these variables and to provide recommendations for enhancing the hospital orientation program and improving the quality of nursing care.

Research Design

The study employed a **quantitative descriptive-correlational research design** to assess the clinical competencies of newly hired nurses. **Purposive sampling** was used to select **50 newly hired nurses** with less than one year of clinical experience from selected hospitals in Quezon City. This design enabled the researcher to describe the respondents' competency levels and examine the association between influencing factors and nursing competency without manipulating any variables.

Research Steps

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design, employing an adopted, validated questionnaire administered to a group of purposively selected nurses and distributed among nurses, with the data subjected to a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. After securing a research permit from the concerned office and ethical approval from the university, and with the respondents' consent, the gathered data were subjected to descriptive statistics and tested for significant relationships.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The study consists of 50 new nurses hired in specific hospitals in Quezon City with less than a year of clinical experience. Purposive sampling was used as the selection method based on the study's inclusion criteria. A self-developed and adopted questionnaire was used to gather data from the participants. Content validation by nursing experts and instrument validity were established before data collection.

Data Analysis Methods

The data are presented using descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation, for demographic characteristics, the level of competency, and influencing factors, respectively. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation is also utilized to examine the significant association between the influencing factors on competency and the level of competency among newly-employed nurses. All significant tests were conducted at the 0.05 level.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

This research sought to evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between factors contributing to competency and the competency level of newly hired nurses. The developed questionnaire was presented to expert validators for content validation, and validity testing was conducted after the questionnaire's reliability was confirmed prior to its use with study participants.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study was limited to **50 newly hired nurses** with less than one year of clinical experience from selected hospitals in Quezon City and relied on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other healthcare settings or experienced nurses. Ethical principles were strictly observed by obtaining institutional

approval, obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and protecting respondents' confidentiality and anonymity, with all data used solely for research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that most participants were female (66%), aged 22–25 years old (74%), assigned mainly to the Obstetrics & Gynecology and Pediatrics wards, and had 7–12 months of clinical experience (72%), indicating that the majority were beginner-level nurses transitioning into professional practice. Newly hired nurses demonstrated a very high level of competency in providing quality nursing care ($WM = 4.21$), particularly in medication administration, teamwork, emotional support, patient advocacy, and safety practices, although challenges remained in advanced clinical procedures and stress management. Workplace and organizational factors were identified as major influences on competency development ($WM = 4.41$), with clinical resources, nurse-to-patient ratio, senior nurse support, confidence in basic skills, and a collaborative work environment being the strongest contributors. A significant positive relationship was found between competency determinants and nurses' competency levels ($r = 0.49$, $p = 0.006$), indicating that stronger workplace support, mentoring, staffing, and resources contribute to improved nursing competency and quality patient care.

SUMMARY

The study assessed the clinical competencies of newly hired nurses, identified the factors affecting their ability to deliver quality nursing care, and determined the relationship between these factors. The respondents were predominantly young female nurses with less than one year of clinical experience. Novice nurses demonstrated a **very high level of clinical competency**, particularly in medication administration, collaboration, and patient advocacy. Workplace and organizational factors, including confidence in nursing skills, resource availability, staffing adequacy, and support from senior nurses, were found to greatly influence competency. Moreover, a **moderate positive and statistically significant relationship** was identified between the influencing factors and the competency level of newly hired nurses, highlighting the importance of supportive clinical environments in promoting professional competence.

CONCLUSIONS

Newly hired nurses can deliver high-quality nursing care despite being early in their careers, as evidenced by their very high level of clinical competence. Further, **clinical competency is influenced not only by individual knowledge and skills but also by workplace conditions.** Confidence, adequate resources, appropriate staffing, and support from senior nurses play a significant role in developing and maintaining competency. **Supportive organizational environments are essential** for enhancing the competencies of newly hired nurses. The significant positive relationship between workplace factors and competency suggests that hospitals can improve nursing performance by strengthening orientation programs, mentorship, and continuing professional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The healthcare institution must increase the effectiveness of orientation and transition-to-practice programs, incorporating mentors, coached clinical

experiences, and ongoing competency assessment of new registered nurses. Hospital leadership needs to promote supportive workplace environments by providing resources, staffing, and professional development, and by fostering opportunities for collaboration. Nursing educators can assist the transition by incorporating additional simulation-based education and competency-driven clinical instruction into their curricula. Future research needs large sample sizes, as well as data that cross healthcare institutions.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

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