
The Level of Competency of The Nurses in Clinical Documentation Process: The Action Plan

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ABSTRACT

Clinical documentation is a fundamental component of nursing practice that supports continuity of care, patient safety, legal accountability, and interdisciplinary communication. This study assessed the level of nurses' competency in clinical documentation in the Neurological Ward. Specifically, it examined competency in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude and determined whether significant relationships existed between nurses' demographic profile and competency levels. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was utilized, involving twenty (20) registered nurses selected through total sampling. Data were gathered using a validated researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, weighted means, standard deviations, t-tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings revealed that nurses demonstrated a very high level of competency in knowledge and high levels of skills and attitude. However, moderate competency was observed in the utilization of electronic health record systems and technology-related documentation processes. Statistical analysis showed no significant relationship between demographic variables and nurses' competency in clinical documentation, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis. The findings indicate that competency is influenced more by institutional standards, training programs, and professional practice requirements than by demographic characteristics. Based on the results, an action plan focusing on documentation enhancement, technological competency, continuing education, and quality monitoring was proposed. The study highlights the importance of strengthening clinical documentation practices to improve patient safety, quality healthcare delivery, and nursing accountability.

Keywords: Clinical Documentation, Competency, Knowledge, Skills, Attitude, Nurses, Patient Safety

INTRODUCTION

Clinical documentation serves as a critical element of nursing practice, ensuring accurate communication, continuity of care, legal protection, and patient safety. In specialized clinical settings such as neurological wards, comprehensive and timely documentation becomes increasingly important due to the complexity of patient conditions and the need for continuous monitoring. Nurses are expected to demonstrate competency in documentation through adequate knowledge, technical skills, and professional attitudes.

Despite existing standards and institutional policies, variations in documentation competency persist among nurses. Inadequate documentation may result in communication breakdowns, medical errors, delayed interventions, and compromised patient outcomes. Previous studies suggest that competency may be influenced by educational preparation,

clinical experience, and workplace support systems. However, limited studies have examined documentation competency within specialized neurological settings and explored its relationship with demographic characteristics.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to determine:

1. The demographic profile of nurses in terms of age, gender, years of experience, educational background, and area of practice.
2. The level of competency in clinical documentation in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude.
3. The significant relationship between demographic profile and competency level.
4. The proposed action plan to improve nurses' competency in clinical documentation.

Scope and Delimitations

The study was limited to twenty (20) registered nurses assigned to the Neurological Ward. It focused exclusively on competency in clinical documentation, measured by knowledge, skills, and attitude, using a self-administered questionnaire. External organizational factors such as staffing patterns, workload, and institutional policies were not included.

Review of Related Literature

The literature indicates that nursing competency is a multidimensional construct comprising knowledge, technical skills, and professional attitudes. Educational attainment, years of experience, and workplace training contribute to documentation performance. Furthermore, structured training programs and competency assessments have been shown to improve documentation quality and compliance with healthcare standards. Studies also emphasize the growing importance of technological competency, particularly in the use of electronic health records.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored in Patricia Benner's Novice-to-Expert Theory and Ida Jean Orlando's Nursing Process Theory. Benner's theory explains the progressive development of nursing competency through education and clinical experience, while Orlando's theory highlights the importance of systematic assessment, decision-making, and documentation in patient care. Together, these theories support the development and assessment of nurses' competency in clinical documentation.

Conceptual Framework

The framework posits that nurses' demographic profile influences their competency in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These competency dimensions collectively determine the overall level of clinical documentation competency and serve as the basis for developing an evidence-based action plan.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. The descriptive component assessed nurses' competency levels, while the correlational component examined relationships between demographic variables and competency dimensions.

Research Site

The study was conducted in the Neurological Ward, a tertiary government healthcare institution in Quezon City, Philippines. The ward was selected due to its complex patient population, which requires accurate and comprehensive documentation.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

A total sampling technique was utilized involving twenty (20) registered nurses who met the inclusion criteria. Participants were licensed nurses with at least 1 year of experience and actively involved in clinical documentation. Data were collected through Google Forms after obtaining ethical and institutional approval.

Research Instrument

A researcher-developed questionnaire consisting of demographic information and competency indicators for knowledge, skills, and attitudes was used. The instrument underwent content validation and reliability testing prior to implementation.

Data Analysis Methods

Frequency and percentage distributions described demographic variables. Weighted mean and standard deviation measured competency levels. Independent t-tests and ANOVAs were used to assess significant relationships between demographic characteristics and competency dimensions.

Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between nurses' demographic profile and their competency in clinical documentation in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was secured, confidentiality was maintained, and anonymity was ensured throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that nurses demonstrated a **very high level of knowledge** regarding clinical documentation standards, policies, legal implications, and procedures. Similarly, respondents demonstrated high competency in documentation, particularly in accurately recording, organizing, and maintaining patient information. Nurses also showed a **high level of positive attitude** toward documentation responsibilities and professional accountability.

However, moderate competency was observed in technology-related documentation tasks, particularly in the use of electronic health records. This finding suggests that although nurses possess strong traditional documentation competencies, additional support and training are necessary to strengthen digital documentation proficiency.

The analysis further indicated that demographic characteristics, including age, gender, years of experience, educational attainment, and area of practice, did not significantly influence competency levels. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted. These findings suggest

that institutional training programs, professional standards, and organizational support may play a greater role in shaping documentation competency than demographic factors.

The results support Benner's theory that competency develops through continuous learning and clinical exposure. Furthermore, the findings reinforce the importance of organizational interventions, ongoing education, and technological support in maintaining high-quality documentation practices.

SUMMARY

This study assessed nurses' competency in clinical documentation in the Neurological Ward. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational approach, the study evaluated competency in knowledge, skills, and attitude and examined relationships with demographic variables. Findings demonstrated very high knowledge competency and high levels of skills and attitude among nurses. No significant relationship was found between demographic characteristics and documentation competency.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Nurses demonstrated high overall competency in clinical documentation.
2. Knowledge competency was rated very high, while skills and attitude were rated high.
3. Technological aspects of documentation, particularly electronic health record utilization, require further enhancement.
4. Demographic characteristics did not significantly influence competency levels.
5. Institutional training and professional standards appear to contribute more substantially to competency development than demographic factors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement regular competency-based training programs focusing on clinical documentation standards.
2. Strengthen nurses' technological competency through electronic health record workshops and simulation activities.
3. Conduct periodic audits and monitoring of documentation practices.
4. Develop mentorship and coaching programs to reinforce documentation quality.
5. Replicate the study in larger healthcare settings with a broader sample size to improve generalizability.
6. Implement the proposed action plan to address identified competency gaps and sustain quality documentation practices.

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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