

Competencies of Newly Hired Nurses in the Emergency Room: Basis for Training Program

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the competencies of newly hired nurses assigned to the Emergency Room (ER) and utilize the findings as the basis for developing a competency-based training program. Specifically, it determined the respondents' demographic profile, assessed their competency levels across eleven nursing domains, identified the competency domains requiring priority for enhancement, examined differences in competencies based on selected demographic characteristics, and proposed an evidence-based training program. The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design and utilized total population sampling involving newly hired ER nurses from two selected public hospitals in Antipolo City. Data were gathered using an adopted competency assessment instrument and analyzed through appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The findings revealed that the respondents generally demonstrated satisfactory competency across the identified domains. However, several competency domains obtained relatively lower mean scores, indicating priority areas for competency enhancement. Significant differences in competency levels were also observed based on selected demographic characteristics. The study was limited to newly hired ER nurses from two public hospitals and focused on competency assessment and the development of a proposed training program without evaluating its implementation. The findings provide valuable guidance for hospital administrators, nurse educators, and clinical supervisors in strengthening orientation and professional development programs. The study contributes to emergency nursing practice by providing an evidence-based foundation for designing competency-based training initiatives that enhance professional growth, patient safety, and the quality of emergency healthcare services.

Keywords: Emergency Room nurses, nursing competencies, competency assessment, competency-based training program, emergency nursing

INTRODUCTION

The Emergency Room (ER) requires nurses to demonstrate high levels of clinical competence, including sound judgment, effective communication, teamwork, and decision-making, to provide safe and quality care in high-pressure situations (Fukada, 2018). However, newly hired nurses often encounter competency gaps as they transition into emergency nursing practice, highlighting the need for competency assessment and structured transition programs. By identifying these gaps, healthcare organizations can develop targeted training initiatives that enhance professional competence, workforce readiness, patient safety, and the overall quality of emergency care (Edwards et al., 2015).

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the competencies of newly hired nurses assigned to the Emergency Room (ER) and utilize the findings as the basis for developing a competency-based training program. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the newly hired Emergency Room nurses in terms of:
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Educational attainment
 - d. Length of Emergency Room experience
 - e. Previous clinical experience
 - f. Employment status
2. What is the competency level of newly hired Emergency Room nurses across the following domains:
 - a. Safe and Quality Nursing Practice
 - b. Management of Resources and Environment
 - c. Health Education
 - d. Legal Responsibility
 - e. Ethico-Moral Responsibility
 - f. Personal and Professional Development
 - g. Quality Improvement
 - h. Research
 - i. Record Management
 - j. Communication
 - k. Collaboration and Teamwork
3. Which competency domains demonstrate the greatest competency gaps among newly hired Emergency Room nurses?
4. Is there a significant difference in the competencies of newly hired Emergency Room nurses when grouped according to their demographic characteristics?
5. Based on the findings, what competency-based training program may be proposed?

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on assessing the competencies of newly hired nurses assigned to the Emergency Room of the Antipolo City Hospital System–Cabading Annex and the Rizal Provincial Hospital System–Antipolo Annex I. The respondents were newly hired ER nurses with less than one year of experience during the 2025–2026 calendar year. The study examined competency across eleven core nursing domains using an adopted competency assessment instrument. It was limited to competency assessment and the development of a proposed competency-based training program; the implementation and evaluation of the proposed program were not included in the study.

Review of Related Literature

Nursing competence is fundamental to delivering safe and high-quality patient care, particularly in emergency settings where nurses must apply clinical knowledge, technical skills, sound judgment, communication, and ethical decision-making under pressure (Fukada, 2018).

However, newly hired nurses often face challenges during their transition to professional practice, including gaps in clinical judgment, communication, prioritization, and decision-making. To address these issues, healthcare organizations implement competency-based orientation, mentorship, and transition programs, which have been shown to enhance clinical competence, confidence, professional adaptation, and patient safety while supporting continuous professional development (Edwards et al., 2015; Spector et al., 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Patricia Benner's Novice-to-Expert Theory (1984), which explains that nursing competence develops progressively through education, clinical experience, and professional practice. According to the theory, newly hired nurses are generally at the novice or advanced beginner stage and require continuous learning and clinical exposure to develop higher levels of competence. The theory supports the assessment of competency levels and the identification of competency gaps that serve as the basis for developing a competency-based training program.

Conceptual Framework

The study adopted the Input–Process–Output (IPO) Model as its conceptual framework. The input includes the demographic profile of the newly hired Emergency Room nurses and their competency levels across the identified nursing domains. The process involves competency assessment, data analysis, and identification of competency gaps. The output is the proposed competency-based training program designed to strengthen the competencies of newly hired Emergency Room nurses and improve emergency healthcare delivery.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to assess the competencies of newly hired nurses assigned to the Emergency Room and utilize the findings as the basis for developing a competency-based training program.

Research Design

A descriptive quantitative research design was used to determine the competency levels of newly hired Emergency Room nurses and identify competency gaps across the identified nursing domains. The design also examined whether significant differences existed in competency levels when respondents were grouped according to selected demographic characteristics.

Research Steps

The study began with a review of related literature to establish the foundation of nursing competencies among newly hired Emergency Room nurses. After finalizing the research objectives, methodology, and competency assessment instrument, data were collected and analyzed to determine competency levels and identify gaps. The findings then served as the basis for developing a competency-based training program.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The study employed total sampling, involving all newly hired nurses with less than one year of Emergency Room experience from the Antipolo City Hospital System–Cabading Annex and the Rizal Provincial Hospital System–Antipolo Annex I during the 2025–2026 calendar year. Data were gathered using an adopted competency assessment questionnaire that underwent content validation by nursing experts prior to administration. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the concerned hospital authorities, and informed consent was secured from all respondents before distributing the questionnaires.

Data Analysis Methods

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency and percentage distributions were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, while weighted mean and standard deviation were computed to determine competency levels across the identified nursing domains. Ranking was used to identify competency gaps, and appropriate inferential statistical tests were employed to determine significant differences in competency levels when respondents were grouped according to selected demographic characteristics. The findings served as the basis for developing the proposed competency-based training program.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

This study tested the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the competencies of newly hired Emergency Room nurses when grouped according to their demographic characteristics, including age, sex, educational attainment, length of Emergency Room experience, previous clinical experience, and employment status. The hypothesis was tested using appropriate inferential statistical analyses. The competency assessment instrument underwent content validation by nursing experts to ensure its validity and suitability for measuring the competencies of newly hired Emergency Room nurses.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study was limited to newly hired Emergency Room nurses from two selected public hospitals in Antipolo City during the 2025–2026 calendar year. It focused solely on competency assessment and the development of a proposed competency-based training program, without implementing or evaluating the proposed intervention. Ethical principles were observed throughout the study by obtaining institutional approval, securing informed consent from all respondents, ensuring voluntary participation, maintaining anonymity and confidentiality, and using the collected information exclusively for academic and research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. What is the demographic profile of the newly hired Emergency Room nurses?

Most respondents were 23–25 years old, female, BSN graduates, had less than one year of ER experience, one to two years of previous clinical experience, and were regular employees, indicating they were early-career nurses transitioning into emergency practice.

SOP 2. What is the competency level of newly hired Emergency Room nurses across the identified nursing competency domains?

The respondents demonstrated an overall Competent level across all competency domains, with the highest ratings in Safe and Quality Nursing Practice, Personal and Professional Development, Ethico-Moral Responsibility, and Communication.

SOP 3. Which competency domains demonstrate the greatest competency gaps among newly hired Emergency Room nurses?

The greatest competency gaps were identified in Research Utilization and Quality Improvement, indicating the need to strengthen evidence-based practice and continuous quality improvement.

SOP 4. Is there a significant difference in the competencies of newly hired Emergency Room nurses when grouped according to their demographic characteristics?

Selected demographic characteristics significantly influenced competency levels, highlighting the need for competency development programs tailored to nurses' backgrounds and learning needs.

SOP 5. What competency-based training program may be proposed based on the findings?

A six-month competency-based training program was proposed to enhance emergency nursing competencies, particularly in clinical decision-making, patient safety, communication, research utilization, and quality improvement.

SUMMARY

The qualitative research conducted in mathematics classrooms in the Philippines revealed notable increases in student engagement and passion following the implementation of gamified learning activities. Students demonstrated increased engagement and enthusiasm in mathematics classrooms that integrated gamification components, such as points, badges, and leaderboards. The interactive and competitive components were attractive to students, enhancing enjoyment and stimulating learning activities. The implementation of gamification not only increased the pleasure of learning but also stimulated students to actively engage in solving mathematical problems, so enhancing their overall involvement and commitment to learning.

CONCLUSIONS

- Newly hired Emergency Room nurses demonstrated an overall Competent level across the identified nursing competency domains.
- Research Utilization and Quality Improvement were identified as the priority competency gaps requiring focused professional development.
- The proposed six-month competency-based training program provides an evidence-based intervention to strengthen the competencies of newly hired Emergency Room nurses and enhance the quality and safety of emergency healthcare services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that hospital administrators and nurse managers implement the proposed competency-based training

program to strengthen the competencies of newly hired Emergency Room nurses. Continuous competency assessment, mentorship, and professional development activities should be conducted to sustain competency growth, particularly in research utilization and quality improvement. Future researchers may replicate the study using a larger sample and different healthcare settings to further validate the findings.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

The author declares that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools or AI-assisted technologies were used in the conceptualization, writing, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, or preparation of this research manuscript. All aspects of this study were completed solely by the author in accordance with the principles of academic integrity and ethical research conduct.

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