

From Transition To Transformation: Exploring Filipino Nurses' Professional Shift Into Aesthetic Practice

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Abstract

The increasing demand for aesthetic healthcare services has created new career opportunities for registered nurses, prompting many Filipino nurses to transition from traditional clinical settings to aesthetic practice. This study explored the experiences of Filipino registered nurses who shifted from conventional nursing practice to aesthetic nursing, focusing on their motivations, challenges, adaptation processes, and professional transformation. The study concluded that the professional shift into aesthetic nursing went beyond a simple career change and constituted a multidimensional transformation encompassing personal growth, reconstruction of professional identity, and adaptation to a specialized healthcare environment. The findings highlighted the importance of structured orientation programs, competency-based training, mentorship initiatives, and supportive organizational policies to facilitate successful transitions into aesthetic nursing. The study contributes to the growing body of nursing literature by providing valuable insights into an emerging area of nursing practice and may serve as a basis for future research, educational programs, and workforce development strategies in aesthetic nursing.

Keywords: Aesthetic nursing, career transition, Filipino nurses, professional transformation, lived experiences, phenomenology, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Introduction

In the evolving healthcare landscape, the role of nurses has expanded far beyond bedside care. According to the Philippine Department of Health (DOH, 2023), over 950,000 nurses are registered in the country, yet only about 40% remain actively employed in clinical settings. Many of these nurses report high levels of burnout, heavy workloads, and limited opportunities for career advancement. Similarly, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC, 2024) noted that a growing number of nurses are seeking certifications in aesthetic and dermatologic procedures, reflecting a shift in professional interests toward the beauty and wellness industry.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How does the transition into aesthetic practice influence the career satisfaction of Filipino nurses?
2. How does the shift into aesthetic practice affect the professional identity and role perception of Filipino nurses?

3. What new skills and competencies are most significantly developed as a result of the transition into aesthetic practice?
4. What challenges do Filipino nurses encounter during the transition, and how do these affect their adaptation and transformation in aesthetic practice?

Scope and Limitations

This research focuses on Filipino registered nurses who have transitioned to aesthetic practice within the last five years, across both public and private healthcare backgrounds. Inclusion criteria include at least one year of experience in aesthetic practice. The study is qualitative and relies on interviews, focus group discussions, and thematic analysis. It does not measure quantitative outcomes such as salary or patient satisfaction but centers on the nurses' lived experiences and professional perspectives. Measures such as triangulation and member checking will be used to enhance trustworthiness.

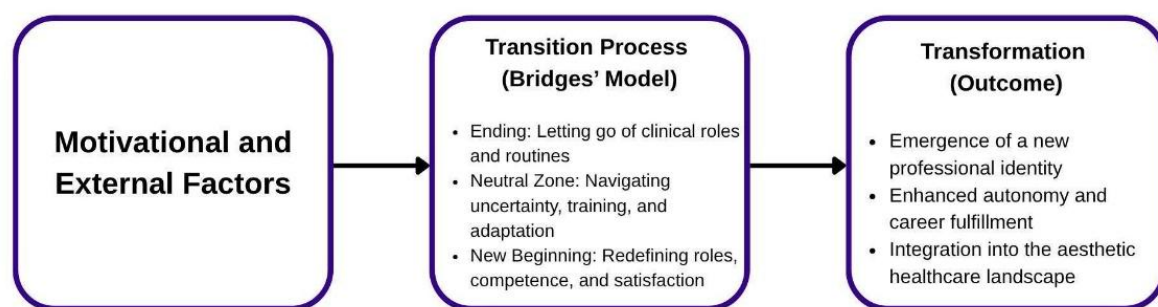
Review Of Related Literature and Studies

The transition of nurses into aesthetic practice is influenced by multiple factors—career satisfaction, economic needs, and personal interest in holistic beauty and wellness. According to De Castro and Rivera (2021), many Filipino nurses experience “career fatigue” in hospital environments, prompting them to explore alternative roles that balance care, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Meleis' Transition Theory (2010), which views transition as a multidimensional and dynamic process that influences an individual's roles, relationships, and self-perception. Meleis emphasized that transitions, whether developmental, situational, or health-illness-related, require awareness, engagement, and adaptation.

Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Filipino registered nurses who transitioned from traditional clinical nursing practice into aesthetic nursing. A phenomenological approach was selected because it focused on understanding the meanings that individuals assigned to their lived experiences and how these experiences influenced their professional identities (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected aesthetic clinics and wellness centers located in the National Capital Region (NCR), Philippines. These healthcare facilities employed registered nurses who had previously worked in hospitals or other traditional healthcare settings before entering aesthetic nursing.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide was designed to facilitate an in-depth exploration of the participants' lived experiences as they transitioned from traditional nursing roles into aesthetic nursing practice.

Sampling Technique

The study used purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly employed in qualitative research to identify participants who possessed direct experience with the phenomenon being investigated (Patton, 2023).

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the institution's Research Ethics Committee. After ethical clearance was secured, permission was requested from the administrators of selected aesthetic clinics. Eligible participants were identified through purposive sampling. The researcher explained the study's purpose, objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and confidentiality measures. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interviews were conducted.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts **were analyzed** using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) following the procedures described by Smith et al. (2022).

The analysis **followed** these steps:

1. Reading and re-reading the transcripts.
2. Making initial notes and annotations.
3. Identifying emergent themes.
4. Establishing connections among themes.
5. Conducting cross-case analysis.
6. Developing superordinate themes.
7. Interpreting the findings using Meleis' Transitions Theory and Bridges' Transition Model.

To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher employed member checking, audit trails, reflexive journaling, and thick description to establish credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Research hypothesis and Validation

Prior to data collection, the interview guide was submitted to three experts in qualitative

research and nursing education for content validation to ensure its clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and alignment with the study's objectives. Any recommendations from the validators were incorporated into the final version of the interview guide before it was used in the interviews.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, the National Ethical Guidelines for Health and Health-Related Research (2022), and the ethical standards of the university.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study explored the professional shift of healthcare practitioners into aesthetic practice, examining four major dimensions:

1. **Career Satisfaction** – Practitioners consistently reported enhanced job satisfaction compared to traditional clinical roles. Stress reduction, improved work-life balance, autonomy, and renewed motivation were key drivers.
2. **Professional Identity** – The transition reshaped identity from disease-centered care to wellness, prevention, and enhancement. Practitioners reconciled traditional roles with aesthetics by maintaining ethical continuity, patient safety, and evidence-based practice.
3. **Skills & Competencies** – Technical skills such as injectables, facial assessment, skin care, and laser procedures were significantly enhanced. Communication competencies improved through patient consultations, expectation management, and personalized reassurance.
4. **Challenges & Adaptation** – Common challenges included managing patient expectations, building trust, navigating business demands, and overcoming experience gaps. Adaptation strategies involved patient-centered consultations, continuous training, mentorship, and supervised practice.

SUMMARY

This study explored the professional transition of Filipino registered nurses from traditional clinical practice into aesthetic nursing, focusing on career satisfaction, professional identity, skills and competencies, and challenges and adaptation.

The findings showed that aesthetic practice provided improved work-life balance, reduced stress, greater autonomy, financial stability, and long-term career fulfillment. The transition also reshaped professional identity toward wellness, prevention, entrepreneurship, and interdisciplinary practice while maintaining ethical and patient-centered care.

Overall, the transition into aesthetic nursing was a multidimensional process involving professional growth, identity transformation, skill development, and adaptation to new responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that aesthetic practice is a transformative, multidimensional career pathway that integrates clinical expertise, entrepreneurial opportunities, and patient-centered care. It enhances career satisfaction by reducing stress and fostering autonomy, redefines professional identity toward wellness and interdisciplinary practice, and strengthens both technical and communication competencies. Overall, aesthetics is positioned as a credible, fulfilling, and sustainable domain within healthcare, offering practitioners long-term professional and personal fulfillment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthen Training and Certification Programs** – Institutions should expand structured training and certification pathways to ensure competence, patient safety, and legitimacy in aesthetic practice.
2. **Establish Mentorship and Peer Support Networks** – Formal mentorship programs and peer collaboration platforms should be developed to help practitioners adapt to patient expectations and overcome experience gaps.
3. **Integrate Business and Entrepreneurial Education** – Training curricula should include modules on practice management, entrepreneurship, and financial planning to prepare practitioners for the business aspects of aesthetics.
4. **Promote Continuous Professional Development** – Encourage practitioners to engage in workshops, seminars, and research to stay updated with evolving aesthetic trends and innovations.
5. **Enhance Patient-Centered Communication Training** – Incorporate consultation, expectation management, and emotional reassurance skills into professional development programs to strengthen patient relationships and satisfaction.
6. **Support Resilience through Networking** – Encourage professional networking and collaborative learning communities to provide ongoing support, knowledge exchange, and confidence-building.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

Artificial intelligence-supported tools were used to assist with grammar, language refinement, organization, and the overall structure of this article. No AI tools were used in the collection, analysis, or interpretation of research data. All research decisions, findings, conclusions, and academic contributions were developed and validated by the authors, who assume full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the study.

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