

Nursing Competence as a Predictor of Patient Satisfaction in the Emergency Department of a Government Hospital in the Cordillera Administrative Region

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction in the Emergency Department (ED) of a government hospital. Specifically, it sought to describe the profile of patient-respondents, assess patients' perception of nursing competence in terms of understanding, practice, and attitude, determine their level of satisfaction with nursing care in terms of responsiveness, communication and explanation, and empathy and respect, and examine the significant relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction. A descriptive-correlational research design was used, and data were collected from 193 ED patients aged 18 years and above using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson correlation coefficient, were employed to analyze the data. Most respondents were female (65.3%), married (69.4%), and aged 61 years and above (23.3%), stayed in the ED for 1–3 hours (75.6%), with severe epigastric pain identified as the most common reason for consultation, and were classified as ESI Level 2 (48.2%). Patients perceived nursing competence as very high ($M=3.66$), with practice and attitude obtaining the highest ratings ($M=3.77$). Patient satisfaction was likewise rated very high ($M=3.64$), with empathy and respect receiving the highest score ($M=3.83$). A significant and strong positive relationship was found between nursing competence and patient satisfaction ($r=0.863$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher perceived nursing competence is associated with higher patient satisfaction. Nursing competence is a significant determinant of patient satisfaction in the Emergency Department. Competence in clinical practice, communication, responsiveness, professionalism, and empathy contributes substantially to positive patient experiences and satisfaction.

Keywords: Nursing Competence; Patient Satisfaction; Emergency Department.

INTRODUCTION

Patient satisfaction is a key indicator of healthcare quality and is strongly influenced by nurses' competence, particularly in the emergency department (ED), where timely, safe, and patient-centered care is essential. Nursing competence, including clinical skills, communication, critical thinking, and professionalism, contributes to positive patient experiences and improved satisfaction, especially in government hospitals facing overcrowding and limited resources. Previous studies have demonstrated that competent nursing care, effective communication, cultural competence, and continuous professional development enhance patient satisfaction, whereas inadequate organizational support may hinder the delivery of quality care (Alharbi et al., 2022; Barral et al., 2023; Notarnicola et al., 2025). However, limited research has specifically examined nursing competence as a predictor of patient satisfaction in the EDs of government hospitals in the Cordillera Administrative Region, particularly in Apayao. Thus, this study aims to determine whether nursing competence predicts patient satisfaction in the ED of Far North Luzon General Hospital and Training Center by assessing levels of nursing competence and patient satisfaction and

examining the relationship between these variables to provide evidence to improve nursing practice and patient-centered emergency care.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine whether nurses' competence levels predict patient satisfaction in the Emergency Department (ED) of a government hospital in the Cordillera Administrative Region. Specifically, it sought to describe the profile of the patient-respondents in terms of sex, age, civil status, length of stay in the ED, reason for ED visit, and Emergency Severity Index; assess patients' perceptions of the level of nursing competence in terms of understanding, practice, and attitude; determine the level of patient satisfaction with nursing care in terms of responsiveness, communication and explanation, and empathy and respect; examine the significant relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction; and propose a competency enhancement program to further improve patient satisfaction in the ED based on the study findings.

Scope and Delimitations

This study determines whether nursing competence predicts patient satisfaction in the Emergency Department of Far North Luzon General Hospital and Training Center by assessing nurses' understanding, practice, and attitude, as well as patients' satisfaction with responsiveness, communication, and empathy. It involved 193 purposively selected patient-respondents who received ED care during the data collection period. The study is limited to a single government hospital, a two-week data collection period, and self-reported patient responses, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.

Review of Related Literature

Recent literature identifies nursing competence as a key determinant of patient safety, quality care, and patient satisfaction, involving clinical knowledge, skills, communication, ethical practice, and professional attitudes (Mrayyan et al., 2023; Abu Zaitoun, 2024). Studies also emphasize that organizational support, professional development, and effective leadership strengthen nursing competence, while responsiveness, empathy, communication, and patient-centered care improve patient experiences (Saiga et al., 2024; Alharbi et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2022). Overall, recent evidence confirms a significant positive relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction, highlighting the importance of continuous competency enhancement in healthcare settings (López Hernández et al., 2025; Novita & Prasetyo, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by three nursing theories that support the relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction. Nightingale's Environmental Theory highlights the role of competent nursing care in creating a safe environment for recovery, while Rochester Competency in Nursing Theory explains competence as the integration of knowledge, skills, judgment, and professional behavior. Roy's Adaptation Model further emphasizes how effective nursing care helps patients cope with illness and stress, contributing to improved outcomes and satisfaction in the Emergency Department.

Conceptual Framework

This study used the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model as its research paradigm, as shown in Figure 1. Profile such as sex, age, civil status, and length of stay; the patient's perception of the level of nursing competence; and the patient's level of satisfaction as input. The analysis of the profile, the level of nursing competence, and level of satisfaction, and the

test of relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction will serve as the process.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive–correlational research design to determine the relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction in the Emergency Department (ED) of a government hospital in the Cordillera Administrative Region (Clarete et. al., 2023). A descriptive approach was used to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, civil status, length of stay in the ED, reason for ED visit, and Emergency Severity Index, patient’s perception on the level of nursing competence of ED Nurses in terms of understanding, practice, and attitude, and patient’s level of satisfaction with the nursing care in the ED. On the other hand, a correlational approach was used to examine the relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction in the ED. This will answer whether nursing competence influences patient satisfaction in the ED.

Research Steps

This research commenced with an extensive literature review to develop a solid understanding of nursing competence and its influence on patient satisfaction. This entailed scrutinizing prior research, theoretical frameworks, and concepts about nursing competence and patient satisfaction.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Data collection commenced after obtaining ethical clearance and permission from the Medical Center Chief of the Far North Luzon General Hospital and Training Center. Data were collected over a two-week period from a final adjusted sample of 193 Emergency Department patients aged 18 years and older using a structured, researcher-developed questionnaire. Purposive sampling was employed, selecting eligible respondents who had direct experience of nursing care in the ED, were physically and mentally capable of responding, and voluntarily provided written informed consent. Questionnaires were retrieved immediately upon completion in a comfortable environment and verified for completeness prior to final data encoding.

Data Analysis Methods

The study utilized descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Frequency counts, percentages, and rankings were used to describe the respondents' demographic and Emergency Department utilization characteristics, while weighted means were used to assess patients' perceptions of nursing competence and patient satisfaction. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to determine the significant relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction and to examine whether nursing competence predicts patient satisfaction.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

The study rejected the null hypothesis after finding a very strong, statistically significant positive relationship between nursing competence and patient satisfaction in the Emergency Department ($r = 0.863$, $p < .001$). The results indicate that higher levels of nursing competence, particularly in professional attitude, are associated with higher patient satisfaction, confirming that nursing competence is a significant predictor of patient satisfaction.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards by obtaining ethics approval, securing informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, protecting participants' privacy and anonymity, and implementing appropriate data security and retention measures. Methodologically, the study was limited to a two-week data collection period in a single government hospital, relied on self-reported patient responses, and did not include the perspectives of nurses or other healthcare providers, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. What is the profile of the Patient-Respondents?

Among the 193 patient-respondents, most were female, married, and aged 61 years and above. The majority stayed in the Emergency Department for 1–3 hours, with severe and moderate epigastric pain and loose bowel movements being the most common reasons for consultation. Nearly half of the respondents were classified as Emergency Severity Index (ESI) Level 2.

SOP 2. What is the patient's perception of the level of nursing competence of ED nurses?

Patients perceived Emergency Department nurses to have a very high level of competence, with clinical practice and professional attitude identified as the strongest areas. Nurses were highly regarded for treating patients with respect and dignity, ensuring safety during procedures, and demonstrating adequate knowledge and preparedness to manage emergency situations.

SOP 3. What is the patient's level of satisfaction with nursing care in the ED?

Patients reported a very high level of satisfaction with nursing care in the Emergency Department. Empathy and respect were identified as the strongest aspects of care, particularly in maintaining patient privacy and making patients feel valued. Responsiveness was also highly appreciated, while communication and explanation emerged as an area for further improvement, particularly in providing clear information about patients' conditions.

SUMMARY

The findings showed that patients perceived nursing competence and satisfaction with Emergency Department care to be very high. Most respondents were older married females with urgent healthcare needs who received timely care. A strong positive relationship was established between nursing competence and patient satisfaction, indicating that competent nursing practice contributes to better patient experiences. While nurses were highly rated for empathy, professionalism, and safety, improving communication and clearly explaining patients' conditions remain important areas for improvement.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that nursing competence is a significant predictor of patient satisfaction in the Emergency Department, highlighting its essential role in delivering quality patient care. Nurses' empathy, professionalism, clinical competence, and adherence to standards contributed to high levels of patient satisfaction, particularly in ensuring patient safety and providing compassionate care. However, despite the overall excellent ratings, communication and the clear explanation of patients' conditions remain areas for continuous improvement, emphasizing the need to strengthen both technical competence and interpersonal communication to further enhance patient outcomes and satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, it is recommended that hospital administrators maintain policies that support high-quality emergency nursing care through adequate staffing, sufficient resources, and proper maintenance of emergency department facilities. Nursing service managers and head nurses should strengthen competency monitoring through regular performance evaluations, mentoring, and case reviews. Emergency department nurses are encouraged to continually enhance their clinical competence through continuing professional development, simulation-based training, evidence-based practice, and effective therapeutic communication. Nurse training officers should implement the proposed Emergency Nursing Competency Enhancement Program (ENCEP) to reinforce essential emergency nursing competencies. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to investigate additional factors influencing patient satisfaction, including workload, staffing, organizational support, and environmental conditions across multiple healthcare settings.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools helped with grammar, stylistic structure, and layout formatting when creating this manuscript based on the researcher's raw data. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret the statistical research findings.

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