
Professional Burnout and Its Relationship to Patient Care Quality and Safety Practices Among Staff Nurses in A Level 3 Government Hospital

Mae Fel R. Sandalo, RN¹, Dr. Fatima Carsola²

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9236-2925>¹

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9607-3738>²

St. Bernadette Of Lourdes College¹, Union Christian College²

msandalo@sbcl.edu.ph¹, fatima87carsola@yahoo.com²

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships among professional burnout, perceived patient care quality, and patient safety practices among 150 staff nurses at a Level 3 government hospital in Southern Metro Manila. Using a descriptive-correlational quantitative design, data were collected through a researcher-developed and validated questionnaire. Findings revealed that overall professional burnout was low (mean = 2.23), although emotional exhaustion was the most frequently experienced burnout dimension. Perceived patient care quality (mean = 4.40) and patient safety practices (mean = 4.65) were rated very high. Pearson correlation analysis showed significant negative relationships between professional burnout and perceived patient care quality ($r = -0.406, p < 0.001$) and between professional burnout and patient safety practices ($r = -0.315, p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that higher levels of burnout are associated with lower perceptions of care quality and safety practices. The study highlights the importance of organizational support, wellness initiatives, and workload management strategies in promoting nurse well-being and sustaining safe, high-quality patient care. These findings provide evidence for the development of a targeted wellness program in government hospital settings.

Keywords: Professional burnout, Patient care quality, Patient safety practices, Staff nurses, Wellness program.

INTRODUCTION

Professional burnout is a psychological syndrome from prolonged work stress, marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal achievement. In nursing, burnout links to lower job satisfaction, engagement, and patient outcomes. Philippine public hospitals face workforce shortages, high patient acuity, and resource constraints, increasing the risk of nurse burnout. Despite evidence of the health impacts of burnout, few local studies explore its relationship with patient care quality and safety in government hospitals. This study assessed nurses' burnout levels and their relation to perceived care quality and safety practices.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the relationship between professional burnout and perceived patient care quality and patient safety practices among staff nurses in a Level 3 government hospital.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic and professional profile of the nurse respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of clinical experience, and area of assignment?
2. What is the level of professional burnout among the nurse respondents in terms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment?
3. What is the perceived level of patient care quality among the nurse respondents?
4. What is the perceived level of patient safety practices among the nurse respondents?
5. Is there a significant relationship between professional burnout and perceived care quality and perceived patient safety among the nurse respondents?
6. Based on the findings, what wellness program may be proposed to help address professional burnout and support care quality and safety?

Scope and Delimitations

The study focused on staff nurses employed at a Level 3 government hospital in southern Metro Manila. It examined professional burnout across the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. It only included nurses directly involved in patient care and relied on self-reported perceptions of burnout, care quality, and safety practices. The study did not include objective clinical outcome indicators, patient satisfaction measures, or healthcare professionals from other disciplines. Findings are limited to the context of the selected institution.

Review of Related Literature

Professional burnout is a major concern among nurses, affecting patient safety, quality of care, job satisfaction, and retention (Jun et al., 2021; Li et al., 2024). Emotional exhaustion, the most common dimension, is associated with lower performance and reduced engagement in patient care (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Garcia et al., 2019).

Studies during and after COVID-19 reported increased psychological demands among nurses, such as stress, moral distress, and compassion fatigue. Major contributors to burnout included inadequate staffing, excessive workload, poor leadership, and limited resources (Galanis et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2024).

In the Philippine healthcare setting, burnout is linked to workforce shortages, migration, low pay, and harsh working conditions (Alibudbud, 2023; Corpuz, 2023). Recent evidence shows that organizational interventions like wellness programs, resilience initiatives, mindfulness strategies, and supportive leadership reduce burnout and improve patient care (Dall'Ora et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2023).

Theoretical Framework

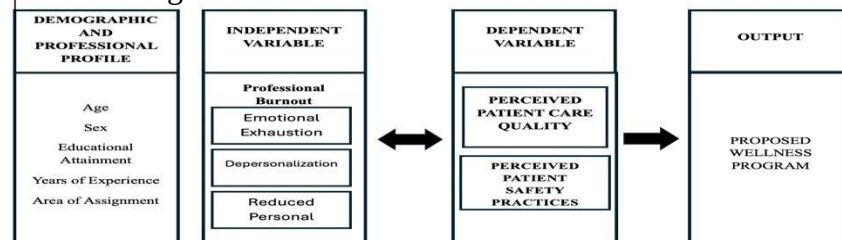
This study is based on Maslach's Burnout Theory, which views burnout as a multidimensional syndrome with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. It explains how prolonged work stress impacts professional functioning and performance.

The study was supported by Roy's Adaptation Model, which views nurses as adaptive systems responding to environmental demands; Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory, which

emphasizes self-care in maintaining professional effectiveness; and Watson's Theory of Human Caring, which highlights the link between nurse well-being and patient care.

Conceptual Framework

The study examined burnout as the independent variable, with perceived patient care quality and safety practices as dependent variables. Burnout, measured by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, was linked to nurses' perceptions of care quality and safety. Findings served as the basis for developing a wellness program to improve nurses' well-being and healthcare outcomes.



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive-correlational quantitative design was used to examine the relationships between professional burnout, patient care quality, and patient safety practices among staff nurses.

Research Steps

The study commenced with an extensive review of the literature to establish the theoretical and empirical basis of the investigation. Following instrument development and validation, ethical approval and institutional permission were secured. Data collection was conducted through an online survey, followed by statistical analysis and interpretation of findings.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The study involved 150 registered nurses selected through stratified random sampling. Participants were assigned to various clinical units and had direct patient care responsibilities. Data were gathered through a self-administered questionnaire distributed electronically.

Data Analysis Methods

Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondent characteristics and study variables. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was utilized to determine significant relationships among variables.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

The study tested the null hypothesis stating that no significant relationship exists between professional burnout and perceived patient care quality and patient safety practices. Validation was achieved through statistical analysis of survey responses using a significance level of 0.05.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study relied on self-reported perceptions and was limited to a single government hospital. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality, anonymity, and data privacy were maintained throughout the study, and ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed low overall professional burnout among staff nurses. Emotional exhaustion had the highest mean score, indicating occasional emotional fatigue. Depersonalization was rated very low, while personal accomplishment remained high, reflecting positive professional efficacy among respondents. These findings suggest that despite workplace challenges, nurses maintain professional commitment and effectiveness. However, emotional exhaustion remains an area requiring intervention.

Respondents rated the quality of patient care as very high, with strong performance in communication, continuity of care, and adherence to nursing procedures. Responsiveness and timeliness of care received lower ratings, likely due to workload pressures. Patient safety practices were also rated very high, with nurses adhering to safety protocols and risk-reduction measures. However, incident reporting and timely documentation emerged as areas needing improvement.

Correlation analysis showed a significant negative association between professional burnout and perceived patient care quality and safety practices. Higher burnout correlates with lower perceptions of quality and safety, leading to rejection of the null hypotheses. These findings highlight that burnout affects not only workforce well-being but also patient safety, requiring organizational attention.

SUMMARY

This study examined professional burnout and its relationship with patient care quality and patient safety practices among 150 staff nurses in a government hospital. Findings revealed low levels of burnout and very high ratings for patient care quality and safety practices. Emotional exhaustion emerged as the most prominent dimension of burnout. Significant negative relationships were identified between professional burnout and both patient care quality and patient safety practices. These findings suggest that increasing burnout may adversely influence nurses' perceptions of the quality and safety of care delivered.

CONCLUSIONS

Staff nurses in the selected government hospital generally exhibited low levels of burnout and very high perceptions of patient care quality and safety practices. However, emotional exhaustion remained evident and was significantly associated with lower perceptions of care quality and safety. These findings emphasize the importance of evidence-based wellness initiatives focused on emotional support, workload management, resilience building, and organizational support systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Implement a structured wellness program focused on emotional well-being and resilience.
2. Strengthen workload management and staffing support systems.
3. Promote regular stress management and mental health activities.
4. Enhance reporting systems and documentation practices.
5. Foster supportive leadership and employee recognition programs.
6. Conduct multicenter studies involving objective patient outcome indicators.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT:

AI tools were used solely for language refinement, grammar, and organization. No AI tools were involved in data collection, analysis, or reporting. All research work, findings, interpretations, and conclusions are the researcher's sole responsibility.

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