

The Lived Experiences of Newly Hired Gen Z Nurses Working in A Selected Hospital in Laguna, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Newly hired Generation Z (Gen Z) nurses face significant challenges as they transition from academic preparation to professional nursing practice. Heavy workloads, workplace expectations, interpersonal interactions, and the need to adapt to fast-paced hospital environments all affect their early clinical experiences. Moreover, this study explored the lived experiences of newly hired Gen Z nurses at a selected hospital in Laguna, Philippines, focusing on their professional tasks and responsibilities, workplace challenges, coping mechanisms, adaptation to hospital culture, and personal and professional growth. A qualitative study using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed. Fifteen newly hired Gen Z nurses were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis. Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking and adherence to established ethical principles. Four major themes emerged from the participants' narratives: embracing professional roles and responsibilities, navigating clinical and workplace challenges, adapting coping strategies, and fostering personal and professional growth. The findings revealed that newly hired Gen Z nurses developed confidence and clinical competence by assuming accountability for patient care, applying evidence-based nursing practices, and fulfilling their professional responsibilities. The study concluded that the successful transition of newly hired Gen Z nurses into professional practice depends on supportive workplace environments, effective mentorship, collaborative teamwork, and opportunities for continuous learning. Strengthening structured orientation programs, preceptorship, mental health initiatives, and professional development opportunities is recommended to promote nurse retention, well-being, competence, and quality patient care among newly hired nurses in hospital settings.

Keywords: *Newly Hired Gen Z Nurses, Lived Experiences, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Professional Transition, Nursing Practice, Professional Growth*

INTRODUCTION

Are newly hired nurses, especially Gen Z's, really taking over the spotlight in Nursing? The nursing field in the Philippines, especially in Laguna province, is undergoing a notable change as Generation Z nurses join hospital environments. Born between 1997 and 2012, Gen Z nurses introduce a fresh array of values, expectations, and technological skills to the healthcare field. Incorporating them into hospitals in Laguna—a region featuring public and private health facilities catering to urban and rural communities—offers opportunities and challenges that demand greater comprehension.

Newly hired Gen Z nurses encounter various challenges as they transition from academic preparation to real-world clinical practice. Entering the hospital environment often exposes them to demanding workloads, long working hours, emotional stress, critical decision-making, and complex interpersonal relationships with senior nurses, physicians, patients, and families. Although many Gen Z nurses demonstrate confidence, technological competence, flexibility, and eagerness to learn, they may also experience anxiety, self-doubt, workplace pressure, and difficulty adapting to traditional hierarchical systems commonly present in hospitals.

Studies have shown that Gen Z nurses value work-life balance, recognition, supportive leadership, collaboration, mental health, and opportunities for professional growth. They are more likely to seek healthy working environments where communication is open, feedback is constructive, and their contributions are appreciated. Additionally, this generation is highly familiar with digital technology and electronic healthcare systems, allowing them to adapt quickly to technological advancements in nursing practice. However, because of their strong emphasis on personal well-being and career satisfaction, newly hired Gen Z nurses may also be more vulnerable to burnout, dissatisfaction, and turnover intention when exposed to toxic work cultures or inadequate support systems (Al-Moteri et al, 2025).

In the Philippine context, newly hired nurses often face additional pressures such as understaffing, heavy patient loads, limited resources, and high workplace expectations. Many young nurses struggle to balance professional responsibilities with personal well-being, leading some to resign early or seek opportunities abroad. As more Gen Z nurses enter hospitals in Laguna and other parts of the country, there is a growing need to understand how their attitudes, values, and experiences shape their adjustment and performance in clinical settings.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to understand the experiences of newly hired Gen Z nurses working in a selected hospital in Laguna, Philippines.

Specifically, it sought answers to the question: What are your experiences as a newly hired Gen Z nurse working in a hospital here in Laguna?

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on exploring and understanding the experiences of the selected Newly Hired Gen Z nurses (ages 21-28) working in a selected hospital in Laguna, Philippines. The study was conducted during the third semester of A.Y. 2025-2026 upon approval of the research proposal and ethical clearance. The data collection was conducted for those who agree to participate in the study. The researchers obtained fifteen (15) participants who are interviewed to reach saturation in phenomenological studies that use in-depth interviews. The following inclusion criteria will be applied in selecting participants: (1) nurses aged 21-28, (2) Gen Z nurses with 6 months to 1 year of bedside experience, and (3) Gen Z nurses working in a secondary, private hospital. And the following exclusion criteria will be applied: (1) Gen Z nurses working in non-hospital settings, (2) Gen Z nurses with more than 2 years of bedside experience, and (3) Gen Z nurses working in a primary, public hospital.

Theoretical Framework

Meleis' Transition Theory is a theoretical framework that may be used to analyze qualitative data on the experiences of newly hired Gen Z Nurses working in a selected hospital in Laguna, Philippines.

Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach through interviews to gather information about the newly hired Gen Z nurses' experiences working at a selected hospital in Laguna, including their insights, feelings, and challenges. The study employed a purposive sampling strategy, including newly hired Gen Z Nurses working in their first six months to one year at a selected hospital in Laguna, Philippines.

Research Steps

This research commenced with an extensive literature review to develop a solid understanding of the experiences of newly hired Gen Z nurses and their potential impact on their professional work. This entailed scrutinizing prior research, theoretical frameworks, and challenges of newly hired Gen Z nurses, particularly in the context of a hospital setting.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The data collection process commenced with semi-structured interviews with newly hired Gen Z Nurses working as bedside nurses in a selected hospital in Laguna, Philippines. The purpose of these interviews was to explore their challenges, coping strategies, and adaptability and professional growth. Each interview lasted around 10 minutes to half an hour and was voice-recorded with the participants' voluntary consent.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis employed a thematic approach, in which transcripts from interviews were systematically categorized to uncover common themes related to the experiences of newly hired Gen Z nurses. The researcher cross-checked the themes to guarantee the reliability and validity of findings.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

By getting informed consent from each participant, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality, and permitting withdrawals at any moment, the study complied with ethical guidelines. Additionally, ethical concerns included the need to make sure that participant opinions were respectfully represented in the final analysis and reporting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of newly hired Gen Z nurses in a selected hospital in Laguna, Philippines. The findings revealed that the participants' experiences were shaped by assuming professional responsibilities, navigating clinical and workplace challenges, developing adaptive coping strategies, and fostering personal and professional growth. These experiences were organized into four (4) emergent themes that reflect the realities, challenges, coping mechanisms, and developmental processes encountered by the newly hired Gen Z nurses as they adjusted to the demands of professional nursing practice. The findings revealed that embracing professional responsibilities is a fundamental aspect of the transition from student nurse to registered nurse. The participants recognized the importance of providing safe, patient-centered, and evidence-based care while maintaining accountability, professional integrity, and ethical nursing practice. As they assumed greater responsibility for patient outcomes, they continuously strengthened their clinical competence, exercised sound clinical judgment, and demonstrated commitment to delivering quality nursing care despite the challenges associated with their new professional roles. The study further showed that navigating clinical and workplace challenges was an inevitable part of the participants' transition into professional practice. Newly hired Gen Z nurses encountered difficulties related to unfamiliar clinical procedures, medication administration, interpreting physicians' orders, heavy workloads, and communication with members of the healthcare team. Despite these challenges, they demonstrated adaptability and gradually increased their competence necessary to provide safe and effective patient care. Moreover, developing adaptive coping strategies emerged as an essential factor in maintaining the participants' well-being. The participants used various coping mechanisms, along with a positive mindset, to overcome self-doubt. These findings highlight that adaptive coping is not merely a response to workplace stress but an essential competency that supports successful transition, sustained professional performance, and long-term well-being among newly hired Gen Z nurses. The findings revealed that the transition into professional nursing fostered substantial personal and professional growth among the participants. Through continuous learning, everyday clinical experiences, collaboration with experienced healthcare professionals, and self-reflection, they gradually developed greater clinical competence, confidence, and emotional maturity. These experiences allowed the participants to establish a stronger professional identity and become more capable of meeting the complex responsibilities and expectations of nursing.

SUMMARY

This study explored the lived experiences of newly hired Gen Z nurses in a selected hospital in Laguna, Philippines. Specifically, the study examined the participants' experiences in assuming professional responsibilities, navigating clinical and workplace challenges, developing adaptive and coping strategies, and fostering personal and professional growth as

they adjust from student nurses to registered nurses. Moreover, a qualitative phenomenological approach was utilized, with data gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews. The collected data underwent coding, categorization, and thematic analysis, resulting in four major themes: (1) Embracing Professional Responsibilities, (2) Navigating Clinical and Workplace Challenges, (3) Developing Adaptive Coping Strategies, and (4) Fostering Personal and Professional Growth. These themes collectively illustrate the realities, challenges, coping mechanisms, and developmental experiences of newly hired Gen Z nurses.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the lived experiences of newly hired Gen Z nurses extend beyond acquiring clinical knowledge and technical skills. Their transition into professional practice is a dynamic process characterized by increasing accountability, adaptation to complex workplace challenges, development of effective coping strategies, and continuous personal and professional growth. Through perseverance, reflective learning, collaboration, and resilience, the participants successfully navigated the realities of early professional nursing while strengthening their competence, confidence, and commitment to providing safe, compassionate, evidence-based, and patient-centered care. These findings underscore the importance of supportive workplace environments, effective mentorship, and continuous professional development in promoting quality nursing practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, hospitals should implement structured transition-to-practice and nurse residency programs, strengthen mentorship and preceptorship, provide continuing professional development and simulation-based training, and promote supportive work environments and employee wellness initiatives to help newly hired Generation Z nurses successfully adapt to professional practice. Newly hired nurses are encouraged to engage in lifelong learning, seek guidance from experienced colleagues, and practice reflective learning to enhance their competence and confidence. Nursing educators should also strengthen undergraduate curricula by incorporating transition-to-practice preparation, clinical decision-making, resilience, communication, teamwork, and stress management, while future researchers should examine these interventions across different healthcare settings to further improve nurse adaptation, retention, and quality patient care.

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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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