



Implications of using the model of competence development for nurses

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ABSTRACT

Background: Nursing, as a professional and academic discipline, requires the development of a distinct body of knowledge applicable to nursing practice. The development of nursing competency is significant to improve the quality of nursing services and meet the requirements of health care needs. **Objectives:** This study aimed to explore how the model of nursing competency development can be used, and its implications for nursing organizations, nursing education, implications for the healthcare system and policy are discussed. **Results and conclusion:** The proposed model provides a comprehensive framework for the changing processes from existing competencies to the needed competencies. To apply the Model of Competency Development effectively to support nurses moving from the existing competencies to the needed competencies as expected to fill out the gaps, several steps are implicated.

Keywords: Implication, model, competency development, nurses

INTRODUCTION

Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training, and life-long learning and has the right to affordable, good-quality healthcare ¹. Poor-quality care can cause death and a global health burden ². According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2023), patient safety is a healthcare discipline that evolved as a result of the increasing sophistication of healthcare systems and the increase in adverse outcomes in healthcare facilities. Its goal is to avoid and decrease risks, mistakes, and harm to patients while providing health care ³. The competency of nurses contributes significantly to the quality of health care and patient outcomes. The development of nursing competency to meet the requirements of standards is critical ⁴. However, the requirements for competencies also change rapidly due to the rapid change in healthcare needs, healthcare demands, and the external environment. The national core competency standards applied to bachelor-level Vietnamese nurses were also issued in 2022, replacing the first competency standards ⁵ in 2012, updating competencies following the changes and meeting healthcare requirements ⁶.

A framework to guide the development of nursing competencies also facilitates the solution to the above issue. Ha and Nuntaboot developed the Model of Competency

Development for Nurses as a framework to provide a process of changing the competencies of nurses from existing competencies to needed competencies, which is considered the ultimate goal of nurses' competency ⁷. The model emphasizes the importance of competencies among nurses and indicates the big gaps among needed competencies, existing competencies, and national competency standards for nurses (Figure 1).



Figure 1. The Model of Competency Development for Nurses

(Source: Ha DT & Nuntaboot K (2023). doi:10.51298/vmj.v525i1.5057)

To close the gaps, several strategies need to be developed and considered. The descriptive knowledge generated can assist in the development of strategies to strengthen the status of the nursing profession and improve the competencies of nurses contributing to the enhancement of the quality of nursing care. By applying the model effectively to support nurses in moving to the optimal competencies to fill out the gaps, numerous of stakeholders are implicated.

Implications for using the Model

Implications for nurses and nursing organizations: The contents and knowledge generated from the model add depth, breadth, and substance to the body of knowledge circumscribing nurses' competencies. The Model of Competency Development would

benefit nurse professionals and other healthcare disciplines in solving the competency dilemma of nurses practicing in different contexts and environments. Nursing organizations should play a vital role in implementing the model.

It is strongly implicated that the gaps between existing competencies that nurses hold and needed competencies, which are viewed as the ultimate goal of competency development process, need to be closed. The ways that nurses use to close these gaps and the factors influencing nurses' competency development process also need to be identified. Nurses themselves can use this model as a tool to identify their competency status as well as find appropriate ways to develop their competencies. Nurse administrators, hospital authorities, and hospital administrative departments should encourage nurses to define and adopt a standardized description of competent nursing practice. In situation where, there are no valid tools available to evaluate nursing competencies in general or particular clinical practice, based on the needed competencies, the development of valid and reliable instruments for the validation nursing competencies needs to be encouraged and should become the standard for a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of nursing practice.

Administrators could be visionary in their approach to new methods or systems of competency validation, such as using the process framework to assess competencies among nurses and stopping replying to chart checks and other forms of documented minutiae to confirm a nurse's competencies at the bedside; instead, they could use every resource available to support nurses and find ways to develop evaluation systems that nurture and reward competent individuals. Administrators could also support and advocate for the nurses to develop their competencies. One of the significant recommendations that can be drawn from the model is for nursing associations or nursing councils. The gaps that emerged from the competency standards of nurses and the needed competencies addressed implicate that the core competency standards of nurses should be improved. It is recommended that, in addition to continue modifying the national competency standards, the competencies offered in the model suggest a foundation upon which to discuss the role of nurses in providing nursing services and nursing care for clients. It implies that nurses themselves should also make efforts to improve and complete their competencies to meet needed competency requirements with the support and facilitation of other significant stakeholders.

Implications for nursing education: Under the structure of the Model of Competency Development, nursing education, and training are viewed as complements supporting to the nursing organization in implementing the model changes. It is implicated that nursing educators may find gaps between educational preparation in nursing schools and the requirements for nursing practice in clinical settings. Innovation for nursing education at various nursing competency levels to cope with different clients' needs within the context of clinical settings should be considered and developed. One of the important implications for nursing education that can be drawn from this model is that relevant stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Training, the Nurse Association, the authorities of clinical settings, the universities or nursing education institutions, and especially those individuals involved in the academic settings, should open up dialogue and discuss the feasibility of incorporating the principles of holistic nursing with the traditional

model of nursing education, as well as proposing for an appropriate nursing education strategies. Furthermore, the inputs, processes and outputs of nursing education should also be re-evaluated and considered.

The development of a competency-based nursing curriculum or currently an outcome-based nursing curriculum applied for particular levels of nursing education should be undertaken. The findings from this study and the six themes of competencies-knowledge, skills, attitude, and value-based nursing care; legal and ethical competencies; transcultural competencies; and essential attributes of nurses-could be useful during the development process. Nurse teachers should also include the components of the six competency themes throughout the curricula. Nurse educators need to improve both quantity and quality to educate nurse students and nurses who engage in updating nursing professionals effectively. Besides, specialized and advanced courses should be designed and implemented in both nursing schools and clinical settings. The research findings show that numerous nurses are not interested in the nursing profession or have a really low commitment to the job. Nurse educators therefore should concern with promoting love and interest in nursing as well as positive attitudes towards nursing among nurse students during their studies in nursing schools.

Implications for the healthcare system and policy: The model strongly indicates the real situation of nurses' competencies in clinical settings, which are extremely different from their recognitions, expectations and wishes. Numerous factors consequently impact nurses' performances and nurses' competency development, which in turn impact on quality of patients' outcomes and the well-being of nurses as well. The Model of Competency Development for Nurses is as a noteworthy product that helps the significant stakeholders of the healthcare services system, as well as policy producers, administrators, and managers to understand existing and needed competencies among nurses in real situations in clinical settings; to realize the impediments of competency development among nurses and the quality of nursing practice; and to recognize the urgent need to innovate and develop regulations, laws, standards, and guidelines to solve these issues.

The implications for the healthcare services system and public policy include quality standards of nursing services, the development of nursing and healthcare human resources, innovation for nursing education and training mechanisms are needed; nursing roles regulations should be revised and categorized clearly according to each nursing education level; working shift of nurses should be considered and designed to appropriate to nurses both mental and physical aspects; design and develop the guideline for oriented mass media advertising for the nursing profession is highly recommended; putting more attentions and concerns to the nursing profession in general and nurses employing in clinical settings is needed; enhancing compensation for nurses need to be considered and implemented.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Model of Competency Development among Nurses is a holistic process model that provides a comprehensive, systematic, and concise process framework regarding competency development among nurses practicing in different contexts and environments.

The model provides adequate and clear content of needed competencies as an ultimate goal of the competency development process among nurses.

Nursing is an innovative, challenging, and rewarding career with high demands. According to the World Health Organization, nurses are often the first and sometimes the only health professionals that people see, and the quality of nurses' assessment, care, and treatment is vital. By developing nursing workforces, countries can achieve the triple impact of improving health, promoting gender equity, and supporting economic growth⁸. Nursing today stands at the intersection of powerful forces. The increasingly complex technology growth, an aging population, dramatically changed work environments, and rapid growth in scientific knowledge require substantially expanded nursing roles and responsibilities. In the face of such pressures, there is the important question of how to better educate a competent global nurse workforce for the future. Traditional models of work and learning are increasingly dysfunctional for successful performance in today's health systems. This has impelled an interest in how to prepare knowledge workers to be able to provide acceptable levels of care to culturally diverse societies. Nursing continues to be one of the most trusted professions⁹. The model of Benner provides the most useful frameworks for assessing nurses' needs at different stages of professional growth from novice to expert¹⁰. However, on the journey of nurses' competency development, several factors impede or facilitate the journey¹¹. To maintain and improve the capacity of nurses, it requires the cooperation of all relevant sectors.

The Model of Competency Development for Nurses provides a comprehensive process of competency development among nurses that can be applied in diverse clinical settings, such as hospitals or clinics at all levels⁷. The institutions that apply the model can follow the process of competency development for nurses as indicated, including identifying gaps between existing and needed competencies in real clinical contexts; identifying suitable competency development strategies for nurses as well as influencing factors of nurses' competency development journey; and addressing appropriate implementation strategies help nurses to meet the needed competencies. A holistic competency development process model provides a comprehensive framework applied in nursing practice, nursing education and training, and healthcare policy used for changing nurses' competencies toward higher levels contributing to enhancing the quality of nursing care. All relevant stakeholders can use the Model in appropriate manners to support nurses in moving from lower competency status to reaching the ultimate goal.

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