

# **"Nursing Competency, Definition, Structure and Development"**

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**Abstract:**

Competency in nursing refers to the fundamental skills needed to carry out one's duties as a nurse. To lay the groundwork for nursing education, a precise definition of nursing competency is necessary. The ideas behind nurse competency are vital to raising the bar for the profession, but they are far from finalized. As a result, there are still obstacles to overcome when it comes to developing training techniques, defining and organizing nursing competency, and determining the appropriate levels of competency for nursing professionals. The current study surveyed the literature on nursing competency, including its characteristics and definitions, as well as its organization, components, and assessment. In addition, we looked into a variety of training approaches that aim to impart nursing skill.

**Keywords:** nursing, competency, definition, nurse, patient.

Modifications to disease structures, an ageing population, and declining birthrates are among the many causes that have significantly impacted healthcare. Healthcare providers and the systems that back them up are as important. A patient with an acute medical illness may, for instance, anticipate that the hospital will provide intensive care for a reduced duration. With the end of therapy comes the critical need for home care so that the patient can be attended to with compassion and dignity all the way to death.

Therefore, nurses should address the diverse needs of their patients. In any field, this talent is crucial for nurses. These days, patients and their families want nurses to have strong critical thinking skills, including the ability to synthesize information from various sources. The daily challenges that nurses encounter keep them reflecting on their place in the world and the impact they may have. On the job, they are expected to provide direct care on an ongoing basis, safeguard lives, and assist with daily operations. (Fukada, M. 2018).

If nurses want to reach this objective, they must improve their nursing skills and apply them in their daily practice. Achieving competence requires dedication to learning and development throughout time. There are two basic components to competence: (1) the drive to prove one's value via the use of one's abilities, which can work in some contexts, and (2) the capacity to do so. Competence, on the other hand, is a personality trait that grows with an individual over time as a product of their passions, experiences, and values. Those that display this superior characteristic of behaviour are more likely to meet with success. Competence is a prerequisite for the capacity to develop other people's competence. (Mrayyan, M. T., et al. 2023).

**NURSING COMPETENCY: DEFINITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS:**

Behaviorism, trait theory, and holism are the three main schools of thought when it comes to nursing competency, according to a concept analysis research. Competency, according to behaviorism, is defined as the capacity to carry out specific, fundamental abilities, and is assessed through the performance of such tasks. Competency is defined according to trait theory as the set of personal qualities that an individual must have in order to carry out their responsibilities successfully. Knowledge, attitudes,

abilities, and values are all part of what is called "competency" in a holistic perspective. Holism is largely acknowledged as a way of thinking about nursing competency, which is seen as a complex integration of knowledge that includes professional judgment, skills, values, and attitude. The ability to adapt one's knowledge and abilities to new situations is an essential talent for nurses, as is the ability to draw on one's own unique set of experiences and insights in their work. (Sam, G., 2020).

Holistic, integrated nursing competency can be defined in two ways:

- 1) By examining a) the Conference for Nursing Education model's graduation achievement goals in relation to improving nursing competency development, b) the International Council of Nurses' International Competency Standards Framework for general nurses, c) the American Nurses Association's Scope and Standards of Nursing Practice. One group of scholars proposed the following definition of nursing competency: "the ability to take action by combining knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and experience acquired as a nurse." This definition suggests that competency is best understood as an integrated performance reflecting the professional nurse's feelings, thoughts, and judgment.
- 2) A second group of scholars argued that competency is best demonstrated when a nurse is able to carry out their professional responsibilities in accordance with their own unique set of attributes, including personal traits, professional attitude, values, knowledge, and skills. (Duru, P., & Örsal, Ö. 2021).

In order to give safe, effective, and professional nursing care to patients, a competent nurse must have these qualities, be motivated to use them, and be able to use them effectively. In order to provide a clear description of the structure of nursing and to lead to the development of evaluation methodologies, these definitions were derived from literature reviews of the notion of nursing competency that utilized domestic and international databases, as well as from references to international standards.

Hence, they will be crucial in studies concerning nursing competency that are to be conducted in the future. Conversely, easy-to-understand definitions of nursing competency and levels of competency should be developed so that more nurses can assess and improve their own nursing competencies in practice. A standardized clinical ladder for nurses has been developed by the Nurses Association. Consequently, the Association created nursing competency indices that could be applied in any field of nursing. To improve the quality of nursing care, these standardized indices were developed to assist nurses in objectively assessing their abilities, using them in various practice contexts, and dealing with a variety of situations. (Tanzo, F. C. 2021).

Providing "clinical nursing care that is based on the nurse's ethical thinking and accurate nursing skills and that is provided to meet the needs of the cared" is defined as a core competency by the Association. T in addition, a clinical ladder was created using the rubric, which consists of four core competencies for nurses: understanding needs, providing care, working collaboratively, and supporting decision-making.

Each competency has five levels:

- 1) following basic nursing care procedures and providing necessary advice.
- 2) practicing independently based on a standard nursing care plane.
- 3) providing care that is tailored to each individual recipient.
- 4) using predictive judgment with a broad perspective.
- 5) in more complex situations, choosing the best way to improve quality of life for patients. Many nurses find that the rubric is useful for self-evaluation and competency improvement because it lays out goals (including performance objectives) for each level.

A comprehensive integration of knowledge, including professional judgment, skills, values, and attitude, makes up nursing competency. It is a sophisticated collection of useful skills that, depending on the situation, cleverly blends or integrates several elements and problems in intricate ways. We looked at the qualities (shared features and attributes) of nursing competency.

In order to become competent nurses, they must have the abilities and character qualities needed to carry out their jobs in an efficient manner while including a variety of components, such as the information, skills, attitudes, abilities to think critically, and values that are necessary in particular situations. (Do, T. H. 2023).

These components fall into three categories: the personal qualities required for nursing, professional attitudes and actions, and the capacity to deliver care based on professional expertise. Affection, empathy, self-control, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills are examples of personal qualities. The following performance standards are involved in professional attitudes and behaviors: accepting responsibility for one's work, exercising autonomy, understanding one's own limitations, offering justifications, upholding patient rights, encouraging lifelong learning, and keeping one's knowledge and abilities current.

The ability to work with other healthcare professionals, build intrapersonal connections, teach and train, manage nursing care, guarantee nursing safety and quality, and increase nursing's capacity are all part of providing care based on professional knowledge and abilities. Nursing competency, then, can be defined as performance features expressly displayed by a competent nurse who possesses certain talents. As a result, nursing competency attributes encompass a wide range of competencies. (Attallah, D., & Hasan, A. A. 2022).

### **NATURE OF NURSING EXPERTISE:**

As a holistic and integrated concept, nursing competency is a topic that many studies are trying to pin down in order to make it quantifiable. A number of scholars examined nursing competency-related English-language literature in order to draw conclusions about the concept's structure, characteristics, features, and definitions. Core competencies essential for ethical and effective nursing practice were defined as part of the current review's definition of nursing competency, which also includes the capacity

to integrate knowledge and skills under specific circumstances or settings. Compatibility in nursing is a multi-faceted term that arises from a variety of interrelated processes. According to the definition, it's a performance competency that lives up to the expectations placed on prospective competencies. Additionally, they divided nursing competency into three main parts: 1) understanding people (through 1) knowledge application and 2) interpersonal relationships); 2) providing people-centered care (through 3) nursing care, 4) ethical practice, and 5) collaboration with other professionals); and 3) improving nursing quality (through 6) expanding professional capacity and 7) ensuring the delivery of high-quality nursing. The researchers laid out a graphic depicting the interdependent relationships among people in need of nursing care, healthcare and welfare professionals, and nurses who are integral to these sectors in order to promote healthy living. (Attallah, D., & Hasan, A. A. (2022).

Researchers have collected longitudinal and cross-sectional data on nursing competency from university graduate nurses working in hospitals to study how nursing abilities develop. Based on conceptual definitions and nursing competency frameworks from domestic and international literature, they constructed a competency framework with four principles and thirteen competencies. Researcher-created questions for the Clinical Nursing Competence Self-Assessment Scale (CNCSS) were also used as a preliminary measurement instrument. The CNCSS measures four competency concepts: the ability to provide care that meets individual needs; the ability to modify care environment and collaboration systems; the ability to devote time to professional development in nursing practice; and the ability to fulfil basic nursing responsibilities, practice ethics, and build supportive relationships. (Do, T. H. 2023).

Clinical judgement, nurse planning, care evaluation, and health p A measure for nurses with 1-4 years of experience assessed nursing graduates' ability. However, the measure was later found to appropriately score nurses with more than five years of experience. Several scholars evaluated worldwide papers from 2000 to 2009 to conceptualize nursing competency. The nursing competency traits and descriptions were used to develop a scale and discuss its components. The ten competency characteristics are personal attributes, cognitive ability, ethical/legal orientation, professional development, collaboration with other healthcare professionals, patient and staff instruction or coaching, management skills, care quality and safety, interpersonal relationships with patients and nursing staff, and nursing care management. Using the above nursing competency categories and features, researchers produced the Holistic Nursing Competence Scale. The HNCS has 36 five-factor components. These characteristics indicate a nurse's general aptitude and skill in staff management and education, ethical practice, patient care, and continuing education. This 36-item assessment makes periodic clinical nurse competency reviews easy.

The scale items represent concept-analyzed nursing competency without modifying their meanings. Thus, HNCS is comprehensive. This scale's reliability and validity support its clinical use. (Munangature, T., & McInerney, P. 2021).

To train nurses who can function in a wide range of facilities and settings, provide educational support

and help maintain stable nursing workforce, the Japanese Nurses Association has been developing a “nursing clinical ladder” as a nationally standardized index. This index is designed to be used in any nursing practice setting, and thus its use is not limited to the facilities with which individual nurses are affiliated. The nursing clinical ladder i) develops a standardized nursing competency index, applicable for all nurses regardless of practice setting and background and supports their competency development; ii) assures and secures nursing quality by properly evaluating nursing competencies, and iii) provides safe and trusted nursing care to patients and service users. The clinical ladder is a system that shows nursing competency throughout different phases, displays target abilities for each phase and indicates nurses’ abilities according to their achievement levels. It enables nurses to assess their own competency levels for self-improvement and can also be used for staff development. A core competency of nursing is “the ability to practice nursing that meets the needs of clients cared for using logical thinking and accurate nursing skills.” The nursing competency structure consists of four abilities: the ability to understand needs, the ability to provide care, the ability to collaborate and the ability to support decision-making. These four abilities are closely related and utilized in all types of nursing practice settings. As shown previously, nursing competency has various definitions, and different components have been indicated. Therefore, future studies are needed to clarify the relationships that exist among the components that support each nursing competency and in what order each element is acquired. Furthermore, it is important to develop nursing competency training methods, evaluate their effectiveness and conduct further research, which contributes to improving nursing quality.

### **Nursing Competency Evaluation:**

Many studies have concentrated on assessing the nursing competency of university-graduated nurses with fewer than five years of experience in order to offer a smooth transition from basic education to clinical practice after graduation. Nurses who have been using the CNCSS for at least a year were the subjects of a competency study. Care coordination," "professional development," "improvement of nursing quality," and "health promotion" had low levels of skill compared to "ethical practice," "risk management," and "basic obligations." As they get their feet wet in the field, new nurses develop a stronger foundation in the fundamental nursing skills related to responsibility and ethics. While caring for patients, it is challenging for them to participate in professional growth and offer personalized nursing care that supports patients' lifestyles. In comparison to nurses with only one year of experience, those with less than five years of clinical experience had significantly higher skill in direct, everyday care, as shown in the study. Making sound clinical judgements, carrying out nursing care plans, and assessing results were all skills they had honed in their capacity to cater to patients' unique health care requirements. A skill that requires nurses to work together as a team—care coordination—was the one that showed the biggest growth. (Attallah, D., & Hasan, A. A. 2022).

Some nursing competency qualities improved throughout the fifth year of clinical experience, but other

areas remained poor and needed development even after the sixth year. A nursing competency scale with 31 items organized into seven domains was created by the researchers to assess the abilities of mid-level nurses. Among mid-level nurses, the data showed a competency plateau.

Put simply, there was hardly any association between the number of years of clinical experience and nursing competency scores among nurses with 5-10 years of practice. The competency levels of these mid-level nurses varied greatly, indicating that some nurses actively sought to enhance their skills while others did not. In order to measure nurses' abilities, many studies use surveys that participants fill out on their own. (Munangatire, T., & McInerney, P. 2021).

Nevertheless, the researchers utilized management evaluation to assess the competencies of typical nurses with over a decade of clinical experience. Clinical judgement and the ability to organize and execute nursing care were two of the abilities that management rated most highly. Responding, adjusting, anticipating, and problem-solving were among the abilities mentioned but not measured on the evaluation form. (Do, T. H. 2023).

Basically, upper management was counting on these nurses to be able to read the room, make the right decisions, and provide results. Little is known about how mid-level nurses improve their competencies, and most studies on nursing competency evaluation have concentrated on nurses with 1–5 years of experience. Conversely, there has been a gradual uptick in the quantity of research examining specific aspects of nurses' ability. The development of social skills, learning behaviour, critical thinking, spirituality, and a feeling of coherence are some of the nursing abilities that have been studied in relation to one another. Additionally, correlations between educational settings, nursing care quality, and present-day employment have been investigated. Competency in nursing is defined as the capacity to provide safe and effective patient care through the application of one's knowledge, judgement, values, and attitudes in the context of a specific work setting. Issues pertaining to the growth of competencies were also explored in these research. To better understand how to train nurses to be competent, future studies should concentrate on determining what variables influence nursing competency. (Tanzo, F. C. 2021).

### **Developing Competency in Nursing:**

The majority of research on nursing competency training approaches has been on pre-licensure programmers, with relatively little research on registered nurses working in clinical settings. Objective structured clinical tests, scenario simulations, and roleplaying are common tools for teaching student's clinical competency. There is a strong emphasis on performance in a variety of clinical contexts, and these approaches take a behaviorist stance towards nursing competency. (Duru, P., & Örsal, Ö. 2021). A popular approach to nursing education, problem-based learning tutorial training has students work in small groups to present a real-life nursing scenario complete with a problem and circumstance, then develop and complete their own learning activities. Learning in this approach is centered on the students; rather than lecturing, classes should promote active learning, which is essential for developing

critical thinking abilities. This highlights the need for more research on nursing competency components and evaluation of training methods to see which approaches yield better results. The techniques of competency training for clinical nurses were then investigated. In order to accomplish specific goals, clinical nurses provide patient-centered care.

Nursing is a constantly evolving profession, and nurses must be able to adapt quickly to new situations by applying the knowledge and skills they gain. The use of clinical judgement is a crucial link between information and competence. Thinking about how one's own behaviour have led to certain results is an important part of making clinical judgements. Consideration of this kind is an element of professional judgement. (Fukada, M. 2018).

A fundamental ability to deliver care according to the needs of the person receiving care is linked with the competency of nurses, which includes the ability to integrate knowledge and abilities in clinical settings. What this means is that improving one's nursing competency is intimately tied to effective reflection. Reflection on one's actions both during and after the delivery of care, as well as the making of judgements as a care giver and learner, are all part of professional nursing practice. To develop competency, nursing practice is essential on its own.

Nursing practice, as one might expect, is situational. Prior knowledge of the context of a given clinical scenario is necessary for any meaningful reflection on that scenario. As a means of enhancing competency, reflection becomes an integral part of nursing practice after the nurse decides and communicates the course of nursing care to the patient, together with the rationale behind the decision and expected results. However, not all nursing competences may be enhanced just by reflecting on one's own practice; clinical judgement training through reflection is essential. (Mrayyan, M. T., et al. 2023).

Competency in nursing encompasses several different areas of study, including but not limited to: knowledge, skills, attitudes, cognitive capacity, and values. In order to train nurses in all areas of competency, it is important to know what each competency entails and how it fits into the clinical ladder. Then, you may design training programmers that cover the order in which competencies are acquired. In addition to conducting competency evaluations, additional research and discussions are required to investigate the results of competency enhancement. (Sam, G., 2020).

### **Conclusion:**

Compatibility with nursing practice is an essential skill for nurses to carry out their duties. A foundational document for nursing education curricula must, therefore, include a precise definition of nursing competency. In order to continue developing professionally after getting a nursing license, it is essential to understand how nursing competencies are acquired. There has been a lack of complete development of the idea of nursing competency, despite the importance of competencies in promoting nursing quality. So, there are still problems with figuring out what competence is, how it is structured, what degrees of competence are required of nurses, how to teach them, and so on. That is why we need further research to fully understand nursing competency.



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