

COPING STRATEGIES OF NEWLY HIRED REGISTERED NURSES IN SELECTED PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN BULACAN

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Abstract

Nurses often make many transitions during the course of a career. The transition to the role of a staff nurse can be difficult for some nurses as it takes time to become oriented to hospital protocols and procedures. This study explores the coping strategies utilized by the newly hired nurses in dealing with the different problems in a new environment. The study's total population were 27 nurses which came from selected private hospitals in Bulacan which includes Marcelo-Padilla Hospital, Sto. Nino Hospital, Rugay General Hospital, and Sagrada Familia Hospital. Descriptive method was used to describe the conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that were expressed, processes and effects that are evident or trends that are developed. The research problem includes the common work-related difficulties that a newly hired nurse experienced while working in a private hospital, the strategies that they are using to cope in different problems they are facing in the hospital setting, and the most and least utilized coping strategies used by newly hired nurses. The most common problem that a newly hired nurses' experienced was difficulty handling many patients as a result of nursing staff shortage. The most common coping strategy they utilized was participation in skills training while the least common were reading books, reviewing lectures, reading journals and online updates.

Keywords: Hired Nurses, Problems Encountered, Coping Strategies

New graduate nurses face many challenges when transitioning to the workforce. They experienced a transition from school to reality of professional nursing that is shocking when they realized there are gaps between their knowledge and what they are expected to know as new nurses. Lack of confidence/competence in their skills, worried about making errors and fear in a new situation and procedure are common to new nurses.

Starting clinical work is a challenging phenomenon. Many of nursing graduates faces with the reality shock and experience a significant mental and emotional stress in their first year of actual hospital experience (Stein, 2011). Research has shown that new nurses, following the start of work, would realize that they are not ready enough and there are contradictions between the knowledge and skills acquired during education and the behaviors expected of them at work (Hezaveh, et al, 2014). Therefore, some newly graduate nurses are not able to handle such conflicts and leave the profession. Moreover, the reality shock is a threatening situation for these new graduates and can be one of the major stressful factors at the beginning of their career. Due to conflicts between expectations and realities of the workplace, these issues will cause the newly graduated nurses fail to adapt themselves appropriately to the conditions. As a result, they represent physical and mental distresses and develop complications such as anxiety, fatigue, increased illness, and job dissatisfaction.

New graduate nurses have to experience a stressful and difficult period of transition to develop required abilities as a professional nurse. Several studies have pointed out the gap between the carrier expectations of new nurses and their actual performance that in addition to imposing high costs upon the organization, can lead to feelings of loss, failure, incompetence, insecurity, and helplessness in the rookie nurses and provide the ground for their job dissatisfaction and turnover (Newton, 2007). Graduation is a major life event that transition through it would affect all aspects of the

student' life. Beginning work in the health profession, particularly for nurses, is associated with more stress than other professions. In this regard, Hezaveh et al. suggest that probably newly graduated nurses lack the required preparedness for dealing with the working complex conditions.

Considering the new nurses' coping strategies to deal with these issues appears to be very important; it can be used as a guide for nursing managers, officials of hospitals, nursing educators, and teachers and it can increase the nursing knowledge in this regard. Employers should give consideration to a newly licensed nurse that is still acquiring foundational knowledge and skills. They are considered novice. Delegation skills will develop over time. Delegations are essential part of employment orientation and staff development but there are many nurses lack of knowledge, skills and confidence to delegate effectively. (Kelly & Marthaler, 2011)

A few studies have been conducted on coping strategies of nurses; however, the results of other studies showed that newly graduate nurses at the start of their work have experiences such as lack of adequate preparation, stress, suffering, and lack of support. Thus, this study was designed to further understand the coping strategies used by newly graduate nurse in the first year of clinical career.

Statement of the Problem

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the work-related problems of a newly hired nurse in selected private hospitals in Bulacan?
2. What are the coping strategies that a newly hired graduate nurse use to cope with the difficulties they face during transition in the hospital setting?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the work-related problems of the newly hired nurses as well as the appropriate coping strategies utilized during the first year of hospital work.

Significance of the Study

The results of the study will be useful to the different sectors in nursing practice. The newly hired nurses and hospital administrators will be provided with information on how nurses successfully adjusted, improved their performances, and became a responsible nurse in the work place which will in turn help improve the overall nursing management system.

Methodology

Design

This study employed descriptive design because it does not intend to penetrate the data in any interpretive depth. Moreover, descriptive method of research is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developed. It is used to answer questions, satisfy curiosity established a cause and effect relationship. It is also the most popular approach in research. It systematically, factually and accurately describe an area of interest or situation.

Research Environment Respondents

The target respondents are t newly hired registered nurses who are working in a private hospital in Bulacan. The following were the inclusion criteria of the respondents:

1. Shall be a licensed nurse.
2. With at least 18 months and below experience of working in a private hospitals.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought the permission of the Dean of the College of Nursing to conduct the study. Afterwards, letter of permission distributed and the questionnaires among target respondents are forwarded to the respective chief nurses of selected private hospitals in Bulacan.

Research Instruments

To provide and gather as much information needed researchers used a survey questionnaire as the main instrument for this study that could generate the desired result from the target population.

The researchers constructed the questionnaires based on the related literature and various books, journals and online articles that they read. The questionnaire was designed to gather needed information from the nurses working in a selected private hospitals in Bulacan about the strategies that they used during their first eighteen months in the hospital as a staff nurse.

The survey questionnaire contains:

Section 1 Demographic Data

Section 2 Problems encountered by the newly hired nurses.

Section 3 Coping Strategies used by the newly hired nurses.

The items contained in the questionnaire comprising of both open-ended and closed ended questions and a combination type that attempted to identify the a.) problems that they encountered on their first twelve months working as a staff nurse and; b.) strategies that they used ; and c.) most to least coping techniques they used.

Statistical Treatment of Data

After the distribution, completion and collection of distributed questionnaires, the researchers tallied the gathered data and utilized the following statistical formula.

1. **Frequency / Percentage** – described the profile and problems encountered by the newly hired nurses.

Computation of the percentage was made using the expression:

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{F \times 100}{N}$$

Where:

% - Percentage

F - Frequency or number of response to every item or question

N - Total Number of Respondents

The Average Weighted Mean – to determine the most and least coping strategies utilized by the newly hired nurses.

Computation of the weighted mean was made using the expression:

$$AWM = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + X_5 \dots}{N}$$

Where:

AWM - Average weighted mean

Σ or $X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + X_5 \dots$ - Summation of the total number of the results from the respondents

N - Total number of respondent

Results

Table 1. Profile of Newly Hired Nurses in Terms of Age in Selected Private Hospitals in Bulacan.

Range	Frequency	Percentage
30-34	5	19.23
25-29	11	42.31
20-24	10	38.46
Total:	26	100

Table 1 shows that out of 26 newly hired nurses, 19.23% are 30-34 years old, 42.31% are 25-29 years old and 38.36 % are 20-24 years old. This result indicates that most of the newly hired nurses are 25-29 years old.

Table 2. Profile of Newly Hired Nurses in Terms of Gender in Selected Private Hospitals in Bulacan.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	7	26.92
Female	19	73.07
Total:	26	100

Table 2 shows that out of 27 newly hired nurses, 30% are male and 70 % are female.

Table 3. Newly Hired Nurses' Number of Months Working in the Private Hospital.

Range	Frequency	Percentage
13-18 months	10	38.46
7-12 months	10	38.46
1-6 months	6	23.08
Total:	26	100

Table 3 shows that out of 27 newly hired nurses, 33% are working for 14-20 months, 41% are working for 7-13 months and 26% are working for 0-6 months. This result consider that most of the newly hired nurses are working an average of 7-18 months in the hospital.

Table 4. Name of the Selected Private Hospital in Bulacan Where the Newly Hired Nurses are Working at.

Hospital	Frequency	Percentage
Marcelo Padilla Hospital	2	7.69
Sto. Nino Hospital	5	19.23
Rugay General Hospital	4	15.38
Sagrada Familia Hospital	15	57.69
Total:	26	100

Table 4 shows that out of 26 newly hired nurses, 7.69% are working at Marcelo Padilla Hospital, 19.23% are working at Sto. Nino Hospital, 15.38% are working at Rugay General Hospital and 57.69% are working at Sagrada Familia Hospital.

Table 5. Work-related Problems of a Newly Hired Nurses Working in Selected Private Hospital in Bulacan.

Problems / Difficulties Encountered	Yes		No		Rank
	F	%	F	%	
Difficulty handling many patients due to lack of staff nurses. (ex. 1 nurse :5-10 patients)	16	62	10	38	1
Lack of knowledge in new technologies utilized in hospital setting like cardiac monitor, mechanical ventilator, etc.	15	58	11	42	2

Table 5. Continuation

Problems / Difficulties Encountered	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		Rank
	F	%	F	%	
Difficulty in meeting other healthcare team's expectation. (ex. new graduates should have fresh knowledge on dealing with nursing intervention to patients.)	14	54	12	46	3
Inability to cope up with stress due to work overload.	13	50	13	50	4.5
Difficulty in providing nursing care due to inability to manage time.	13	50	13	50	4.5
Difficulty handling cases of patients like ESRD, Cancer, Chronic Heart Failure, Etc.	12	46	14	54	6
Difficulty adapting in the new hospital	11	42	15	58	7
Difficulty performing invasive procedure like suctioning, catheterization, injection, etc.	3	12	23	88	8
Difficulty working together with other health care members.	2	8	24	92	9
Difficulty performing non-invasive procedure like vital signs taking, IV regulation, etc.	0	0	26	100	10

As shown in table 5, the problems encountered by newly hired nurses in selected private hospital are: having difficulty handling many patients due to lack of staff nurses and it is the rank 1 (62% of 26) , 58% of them lack the knowledge in utilizing new technologies in hospital like cardiac monitor, mechanical ventilator etc. that falls into the rank 2, 54% are having difficulties meeting other healthcare teams expectation which is rank 3, rank 4.5 are having

difficulties to cope with stress due to work related overload which accounts for 50% and also 50 % had a problem in providing nursing care due to inability to manage time and it is on rank 4 among problems. Rank 6 with 46% is difficulty handling different cases of the patient like ESRD, Cancer, Cardiac heart failure, etc., 42% for Difficulty adapting in the new hospital environment is on rank 7. On rank 8 is the Difficulty performing invasive procedure like suctioning, catheterization, injection, etc. with 12%. Difficulty working together with other health care members gets 8% and is on rank 9 and on rank 10 is the Difficulty performing non-invasive procedure like vital signs taking, IV regulation, etc. with 0% .

Table 6. Coping Strategies That a Newly Hired Graduate Nurses Used to Cope up in Different Problems

Coping Strategies	Weighted Mean	Ranking
Willing to develop skills by routinely performing and repeating it.	3	1
Providing competency by developing skills, volunteer for projects and perform task with confidence.	2.92	2.5
Following standard rules and regulation of the hospital like in charting, color coding in every shifts, etc.	2.92	2.5
Having a commitment and dedication in your occupation in order to render the best quality health care to the patients.	2.88	4
Establishing cooperation and collaboration in other healthcare team in working situations.	2.85	6.5
Use of time management (ex. Giving nursing interventions, charting, etc.)	2.85	6.5
Accepting new responsibilities given by superiors.	2.81	7

Table 6. Continuation

Coping Strategies	Weighted Mean	Ranking
Seeking guidance from experienced registered nurses.	2.54	9.5
Accepting criticisms from other healthcare team.	2.54	9.5
Volunteering for projects that may enhance learning.	2.54	9.5
Identifying the area in the hospital that suits the individual specialization like being assigned in OR, ER, etc.	2.54	9.5
Attending seminars and training that enhances your skills.	2.38	12
Reading books, lectures from college years and other related studies like journals and online readings.	2.12	13

Table 6 shows the Coping Strategies that a newly hired graduate nurses use to cope in different problems shown on table 5. Based on the results, *“Willing to develop skills by routinely performing and repeating it”*, acquired a weighted mean of 3 which ranked 1 and is interpreted as the mostly utilized coping strategies of newly hired nurses. Then, *“Providing competency by developing skills, volunteer for projects and perform task with confidence”*, obtained a 6.³6 weighted mean which ranked 2.5 Next, *“Following standard rules and regulation of the hospital like in charting, color coding in every shifts, etc.”* also got a weighted mean of 6.³6 which also ranked 2.5 based on the formula used in ranking. After that, *“Having a commitment and dedication in your occupation in order to render the best quality health care to the patients”* obtained 6.²2 weighted mean which ranked 8. While *“Establishing cooperation and collaboration in other healthcare team in working situations”* obtained 6.²9 weighted mean which rank as 6.5 Also *“Use of time management*

(ex. Giving nursing interventions, charting, etc.” got weighted mean of 2.85 which also rank as 6.5. Next is *“Accepting new responsibilities given by superiors”* got weighted mean of 6.²5 which ranked 7. Then *“Seeking guidance from experienced registered nurses”*, obtained a 6.98 weighted mean as well as the *“Accepting criticisms from other healthcare team”*, *“Volunteering for projects that may enhance learning”*, *“Identifying the area in the hospital that suits the individual specialization like being assigned in OR, ER, etc.”* which ranked as 9.5. After that, *“Attending seminars and training that enhances your skills”* obtained a weighted mean of 6.7² which ranked 12. And last is *“Reading books, lectures from college years and other related studies like journals and online readings”*, acquired a weighted mean of 6.56 which ranked 57 and interpreted as the least coping strategies utilized by the newly hired nurses.

This result demonstrated that most coping strategies utilized by newly hired nurses is their willingness to develop skills by routinely performing and repeating it and the least coping strategies they used is reading books, lectures from college years and other related studies like journals and online readings.

Summary of Findings

The results shows that most of the newly hired nurses are 25-29 years old. Most of them are female and working in the hospital between 7-18 months. Majority of the respondents are from Sagrada Familia Hospital.

The problems encountered by newly hired nurses in selected private hospital in Bulacan includes 62% of 26 nurses having difficulty handling many patients due to lack of staff nurses and it is the top 1 on the problem. The coping strategies on the other hand were listed, analyzed, and evaluated. The coping strategy mostly utilized by newly graduate nurse is their willingness to develop their skills by routinely performing it which acquired a weighted mean of 3

which ranked 1and is interpreted as the mostly utilized coping strategies of newly hired nurses. Moreover, the least coping strategies utilized by the newly hired nurses is reading books, lectures from college years and other related studies like journals and online reading which acquired a weighted mean of 2.12.

Conclusion

The findings of this study led us to conclude that newly hired nurses working independently experience different problems in their first year of work in the hospital and they use different coping strategies to adjust with the problems they have encountered in their new environment. Moreover, the coping strategies enables them to survive and adjust to the problems that they are facing and by repeatedly performing the procedures while rarely using the strategy of reading books, lectures from college years and other related studies and online readings. This study provides better understanding of the problems they encountered and coping strategies they used giving the hospital administrators an idea on how to manage newly graduate nurses which can result to better retention and patient care.

Recommendations

The findings of this study states the importance of preparing nurses to work in clinical care setting. Like any other field of nursing practice, hospital nursing, as special field of medical-surgical nursing, requires the right preparations in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Adequate and reasonable training and exposure to clinical cases and hospital protocols where they can observe and practice during their BSN degree must be enforced to help them adjust to the actual world of clinical practice should they desire to practice in hospital field of nursing. Good training and exposure during their RLE can best prepare them to minimize their concerns relative to their transitory stage. Secondly, the findings also emphasize the need to

equip nurses continuously to become more competent and compassionate in the performance of patient care. The need for newly hired nurses for continuous growth and development is important to overcome their difficulties and challenges, especially during the transitory stage of their hospital exposure. Lastly, the results of the study highlight the reliance on adequate support systems in the workplace for newly hired nurses to overcome challenging situations. A training program may be organized and facilitated were more experienced nurses' guide and assist newly hired nurses in delivering quality patient care.

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