

Sustainable Young Nursing Business Manager Leadership Competency: The Philippines Experience

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Abstract

This study addresses the critical global shortage of qualified nurse managers, with a specific focus on the Philippines, where the lack of structured training programs for nurses transitioning into management roles has been particularly problematic. Recent research points to the resultant promotion of inexperienced nurses to leadership positions, leading to suboptimal management practices and compromised care quality. Aimed at enhancing the leadership competencies vital for the healthcare sector's sustainability, this research, conducted in Metro Manila, gathers insights from nursing business experts on essential skills for sustainable leadership in young nursing business managers. It seeks to explore expert perspectives and assess the competency levels of these managers using an exploratory sequential mixed methods design. This design integrates qualitative and quantitative methodologies to determine expert opinions on necessary leadership skills, profile participants by demographic factors, evaluate competency levels, and formulate recommendations based on the study's findings. Initial interviews with nursing business leaders in Manila informed the development of a questionnaire, leading to the identification of five key competency themes: professional conduct, educational competency, individual assessment, trans-cultural competency, and informatics technology competency. The study concludes that a diverse range of skills and competencies are essential for the effective functioning of young nurse business leaders in both occupational and professional contexts. Highlighting the importance of comprehensive training programs, the findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on enhancing the quality and sustainability of healthcare services through improved leadership competencies among young nursing managers.

Keywords: Nursing, Professional conduct, Individual assessment, Informatic tech, educational competencies, Philippines

Introduction

The development of leadership skills among nursing practitioners has garnered more attention in recent years. According to research, (Cummings et al, 2018; Havaei et al., 2021), leadership skills are

crucial for efficient healthcare management and the provision of high-quality patient care. Nevertheless, there is a perceived shortage in the development of sustainable young nurse business manager leadership competencies, notably in the Philippines, despite the significance of leadership competencies. The need for leadership development programs that are specifically suited to the demands and difficulties experienced by young nursing professionals in the Philippines has recently come to light in research.

A study by Wong et al. (2020) revealed that nursing students in the Philippines felt underconfident in their leadership abilities and perceived themselves as inadequately prepared for leadership roles. Building on this finding, subsequent research by Wang et al. (2021) identified several challenges faced by Filipino nursing professionals in cultivating their leadership skills, such as the absence of mentorship, limited access to training opportunities, and constraints on resources. These studies collectively underscore the necessity for bespoke leadership development programs. Such programs should be designed to meet the specific needs and overcome the challenges encountered by young nursing professionals in the Philippines, thereby fostering a stronger foundation for leadership within the nursing community.

The nursing profession is crucial in providing healthcare services worldwide, but there is a reported shortage of qualified nurse managers in healthcare facilities in many countries, including the Philippines. A recent study by Botezat et al. (2024) identified that the shortage of nurse managers in the Philippines is mainly due to the absence of training programs for nurses to transition into management positions. This has resulted in the promotion of nurses with minimal or no management experience to leadership positions, leading to ineffective management practices and reduced quality of care. Moreover, young nurse managers in the Philippines face a lack of focus on sustainable leadership competency. A study by Poon et al. (2022) found that there is a need for healthcare organizations to adopt sustainable leadership practices to ensure the long-term sustainability of healthcare services. However, young nurse managers often lack the necessary skills to implement sustainable leadership practices. This study addressed these issues by exploring the views of nursing business experts on the skills needed for sustainable young nursing business manager leadership competency in Metro Manila, Philippines, and the most effective strategies for developing these skills. Additionally, the study aims to assess the level of competency of young nurse managers using a newly developed survey tool and draw recommendations from the mixed-methods study's results.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the sustainable young nursing business manager leadership competency among nurse business leaders both in the private and public sectors of the Philippines healthcare sector. Specifically, the study provided answers to the following research objectives: 1) to determine the demographic profile of the participants along with gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, religion, work experience, type of institution, and work status; 2) to determine nursing business experts' views regarding the skills needed for sustainable young nursing business manager leadership competency among young nursing business managers in Metro Manila, Philippines, and the most effective strategies for developing these skills; and 3) to determine the level of competency of young nurse business managers who take the newly developed survey tool. The overarching goal is to contribute to the advancement of effective leadership development programs and practices within the context of young nurse business managers in Metro Manila, Philippines.

Methodology

The research employed an exploratory sequential mixed methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the skills needed for sustainable young nursing business manager leadership competency in Metro Manila, Philippines. The study focused on nurse experts, utilizing a purposive sampling method to select eleven (11) participants for qualitative data and one hundred seventeen (117) for the quantitative data meeting specific inclusion criteria. These Filipino nursing business experts had at least five years of leadership experience in chief nurse, hospital administrator, or dean roles, working with government or private nursing universities or healthcare institutions in four Manila districts, and possessing a master's degree in nursing. A range of research instruments, including semi-structured interviews, observations, and field notes, was utilized to gather qualitative data, offering an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences. Ethical considerations, such as confidentiality and the freedom to withdraw were paramount during face-to-face data gathering, aligning with Philippine laws on data management. The qualitative data was analyzed using the Colaizzi 7-step technique, providing a systematic approach to data collection and interpretation. Concurrently, the quantitative data underwent statistical treatments, including weighted mean, frequency counts, and t-tests via the SPSS program, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of the research questions.

Results and Discussion

1. Analysis of Respondents' Demographics

Table 1
Distribution of the Respondents' Demographics

Gender	Frequency (F)	Percentages (%)	Std. Dev.
Female	71	60.70	0.832
Male	46	39.30	0.611
Total	117	100.0%	0.722
Age (Years)			
18-25	20	17.10	0.610
26-33	46	39.30	0.654
34+	51	43.60	0.727
Total	117	100.0%	0.664
Civil Status			
Single	73	62.40	0.986
Married	44	37.60	0.729
Total	117	117	0.858
Educational Attainment			
Bachelor's Degree	74	63.20	0.994
Master's Degree	26	22.22	0.762
Doctorate Degree	13	11.10	0.655
Diploma	3	2.60	0.598
Post Doctorate	1	0.90	0.502
Total	117	100.0%	0.702
Religious Affiliation			
Christian	108	92.30	0.999
Muslim	6	5.10	0.641
Hinduism	1	0.90	0.613
Pagan	1	0.90	0.613
Other	1	0.90	0.613
Total	117	100.0%	0.696
Work Experience (Years)			
1-5	42	35.90	0.875
6-10	42	35.90	0.875
10+	33	28.20	0.793
Total	117	100.0%	0.848
Institutional Affiliation			
Private Hospital	50	42.70	0.854
Government Hospital	36	30.80	0.745
Private University	19	16.20	0.702
Government University	12	10.30	0.678
Total	117	100.00%	0.745
Work Status			
Staff Nurse	83	70.94	0.998
Nurse Manager/Business Manager	25	21.37	0.741
Nursing Director	9	7.69	0.652
Total	117	100.00%	0.797

The demographic analysis of the respondents reveals a diverse sample population within the context of the study on nursing business experts in Metro Manila, Philippines. In terms of gender distribution, a notable majority comprises female participants, constituting 60.70%, while males represent 39.30%. The age distribution showcases a mix, with 17.10% falling within the 18-25 age group, 39.30% in the 26-33 age bracket, and 43.60% aged 34 and above. Civil status diversification indicates that 62.40% of the participants are single, with 37.60% being married. Educational backgrounds are varied, with 63.20% holding a Bachelor's Degree, 22.22% with a Master's Degree, 11.10% possessing a Doctorate Degree, and smaller percentages with Diploma (2.60%) and Post-Doctorate (0.90%). Religious affiliation reveals a predominantly Christian group at 92.30%, with 5.10% identifying as Muslim, and smaller percentages following Hinduism, Paganism, and other religions. Work experience distribution is dispersed, with 35.90% having 1-5 years, another 35.90% with 6-10 years, and 28.20% possessing 10 or more years of experience. Institutional affiliations show diversity, with 42.70% in private hospitals, 30.80% in government hospitals, 16.20% in private universities, and 10.30% in government universities. Work status diversification indicates 70.94% as Staff Nurses, 21.37% as Nurse Managers/Business Managers, and 7.69% as Nursing Directors. These demographic insights provided a comprehensive understanding of the study's participants, laying the groundwork for a nuanced exploration of nursing business managers' leadership competency in Metro Manila.

2. Nursing Businesses Experts' Views Regarding the Skills Needed for Sustainable Young Nursing Business Manager Leadership Competency

This subsection presents participants' views on skills required for sustainable young nursing business manager leadership and the effectiveness of skill development. Interviews with nursing professionals revealed five major themes: Professional Conduct Competency (PCC), Educational Competency (EC), Individual Assessment (IA), Trans-Cultural Competency (TC), and Informatics Tech Competency (ITC). PCC emphasizes nursing principles in management, while EC focuses on business knowledge. IA addresses personal growth, TC reflects cultural alignment, and ITC pertains to technology utilization for evaluation. These themes, identified through Colaizzi's data analysis, underscore participants' perspectives on young nurse business managers' competency in healthcare leadership and management.

The first theme focused on the professional conduct of young nurse managers and their application of nursing principles in both management and practice. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining ethical standards and adhering to professional codes of conduct in their managerial capacities. During interviews, participants underscored the significance of ethical behavior. One participant stated, "one of the qualities that define the effectiveness of young nursing business managers is their ability to abide by the ethics of the profession in their daily practices. I believe this can be sustained by adhering to fundamental nursing care processes and practices, along with receiving necessary guidance and employing predictive judgment with a comprehensive outlook" (Interviewee "A"). Another participant emphasized the need for continuous practice to sustain adherence to professional codes of conduct, stating "I am convinced that the quality of adhering to nursing professional code of conduct is among the skills that contribute to the success of nursing business managers. And the best to develop and sustain this is practice, practice, and practice daily without ceasing" (Interviewee "B"). These sentiments align with the assertions of Johnson et al. (2020) and Johnson and Wilson (2019), who stress the importance of ethical behavior and the integration of nursing principles in managerial roles. Effective communication skills are also crucial

for young nurse managers, facilitating rapport-building with staff and efficient coordination of patient care (Horvath et al., 2023). Therefore, continuous professional development is essential for young nurse managers to enhance their leadership skills, remain up-to-date with evolving healthcare practices, and employ evidence-based management strategies (Wilson & Jones, 2023).

The second theme examines the educational aspect of young nurse managers, focusing on their understanding of organization management, strategy, initiatives, and resources. It stresses the importance of acquiring a thorough grasp of organizational dynamics to drive effective leadership in healthcare. Young nurse managers require knowledge and skills in organizational management to navigate healthcare systems successfully and contribute to organizational goals. One participant emphasized the need for continuous education, stating, "No amount of education is enough because the nursing practice evolves daily with different challenges" (Interviewee "C"). This aligns with Adams and Brown's (2021) assertion that young nurse managers with a solid educational foundation are better equipped to make informed decisions and develop effective strategies. Educational preparedness also correlates with greater competency in areas such as strategic planning and resource allocation, as evidenced by Smith et al. (2022). Continuous learning and professional development are crucial for enhancing leadership skills and adapting to changing healthcare environments, consistent with Turner et al. (2020). Ongoing education programs provide opportunities for young nurse managers to broaden their knowledge base and stay updated on emerging trends in healthcare leadership, essential for driving organizational success.

The third theme regarding young nurse manager leadership competency highlights the importance of individual assessment, particularly professional self-assessment and self-improvement. It emphasizes nurses' initiative in evaluating their performance, identifying areas for development, and engaging in continuous learning to enhance leadership effectiveness. Studies between 2019 and 2023 underscore the value of personal growth and self-awareness in leadership development. Jenkins et al. (2021) argue that active participation in self-assessment helps young nurse managers identify strengths and areas for improvement. Brown & Johnson (2020) stress continuous self-improvement to enhance leadership capabilities. Similarly, Dillard-Wright et al. (2020) suggest that self-reflection enables a deeper understanding of values, beliefs, and leadership styles, fostering increased self-confidence. Briller et al. (2021) note that self-assessment fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective decision-making among young nurse managers. Orukwoku (2022) asserts that commitment to self-improvement positively impacts overall performance. Young nurse managers must recognize self-assessment and self-improvement as integral to professional development, enhancing leadership competencies and organizational impact.

The third theme in young nurse manager leadership competency centers on individual assessment, emphasizing professional self-assessment and self-improvement. Nurses are urged to evaluate their performance, identify development areas, and engage in continuous learning for enhanced leadership effectiveness. Studies conducted between 2019 and 2023 highlight the importance of personal growth and self-awareness in leadership development. Jenkins et al. (2021) advocate for active participation in self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Brown & Johnson (2020) emphasize continuous self-improvement to enhance leadership capabilities.

Similarly, Dillard-Wright et al. (2020) suggest that self-reflection fosters a deeper understanding of values, beliefs, and leadership styles, increasing self-confidence. Briller et al. (2021) note that self-assessment promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective decision-making among young nurse managers. Orukwoku (2022) asserts that commitment to self-improvement positively impacts overall performance. Recognizing self-assessment and self-improvement as integral to professional

development is crucial for young nurse managers, enhancing leadership competencies and organizational impact.

The fifth theme in young nurse manager leadership competency focuses on informatics technology proficiency, crucial for managing health information and business management progress. It underscores the necessity for young nurse managers to adeptly use informatics tools to improve healthcare delivery, decision-making, and organizational efficiency. Studies between 2019 and 2023 highlight the significance of informatics technology in leadership roles, emphasizing its impact on patient outcomes and organizational performance. Smith et al. (2022) emphasize the need for nurse managers to possess informatics competency for effective health information management and evidence-based decision-making. Johnson et al. (2020) affirm the importance of electronic health records proficiency for workflow optimization and patient safety. Rubel et al. (2021) note that informatics tools enhance communication and resource allocation within healthcare organizations. Drew and Pandit (2020) advocate for embracing technology for process improvement in healthcare delivery. Informatics competency positively affects patient outcomes and healthcare quality, reducing errors and increasing productivity (Adams et al., 2021). Young nurse managers should prioritize continuous learning to leverage informatics tools effectively, driving positive change and improving organizational performance.

3. Level of Competency of Young Nurse Business Managers

Table 2
Level Competency of Young Nurse Business Managers

	Dimensions	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	T-Value
1	Professional conduct competency	4.35	Excellent	.110
2	Educational competency	4.13	Very Good	.104
3	Individual assessment competency	4.04	Very Good	.133
4	Culturally inclined competency	4.04	Very Good	.100
5	Informatic tech competency	3.33	Excellent	.103
	Average	4.18	Very Good	.133

t = 1.96, p ≤ 0.05)

Table 2 displays the competency levels of young nurse business managers, analyzed based on five major themes: professional conduct, education, individual assessment, cultural sensitivity, and informatics technology. Professional conduct received the highest rating of 4.35, indicating an "excellent" level. This suggests that nurse managers consistently demonstrate professionalism and uphold high standards. Nursing's specialized nature underscores the importance of their decisions, impacting both staff and patients. Adhering to professional conduct is fundamental in nursing, guiding managers in their duties toward employees and patients alike.

The study's revelation of a significant number of respondents displaying excellent professional conduct aligns with an interviewee's statement: "In my leadership role, I ensure adherence to ethical standards, which enhances our hospital's performance. Leading by example is crucial." This sentiment echoes Rubel et al. (2021), who found that consistent professional conduct among nursing managers improves job performance. Haaland et al. (2021) further support this, noting that adherence to professional codes enhances nurses' effectiveness. Thus, the study underscores the positive impact of adhering to professional conduct standards among young nursing business managers, contributing to performance improvement.

The study identified informatics tech competency as the second highest-rated dimension of young nursing business manager leadership competency, with an average mean of 4.33, indicating "excellent" proficiency. This suggests managers effectively integrate technology into healthcare responsibilities while maintaining data security and privacy. They demonstrate innovation to stay competitive and abreast of healthcare advancements. Technology significantly impacts service quality in healthcare, regardless of institution size. The findings highlight technology's positive influence on leadership outcomes, particularly in enhancing patient care quality. Robins and Davidhizar (2020) assert that informatics tech competency improves nursing managers' leadership and care quality. Similarly, Hsueh-Feng et al. (2021) emphasize its importance for leadership and performance improvement. Uchmanowicz (2020) found high levels of informatics tech competency among nursing managers, attributing it to enhancing care quality and fostering nurses' competence and self-appreciation.

Educational competency ranked third in young nursing business managers' leadership proficiency, with an average mean of 4.13, denoting a "very good" level. This suggests managers effectively lead employees, although not exceptionally, as they didn't achieve the highest "excellent" rating. They meet leadership standards through their current educational proficiency, demonstrating planning, leading, and controlling concepts. Walpita and Arambepola (2020) argue that educational competency enhances healthcare service efficiency and nurses' performance. Sarikose and Goktepe (2022) found consistent integration of educational competency beneficial for nursing managers, fostering practical skills in nurses. Thus, demonstrating academic competency is critical for effective nursing leadership.

In this study, individual assessment and cultural competency emerged as the less emphasized aspects of leadership skills among young nursing business managers, receiving a mean rating of 4.04, which corresponds to a "very good" level of competency. While managers displayed commendable behaviors and recognized the importance of workforce diversity, these practices were not uniformly applied, falling short of the highest "excellent" rating. This inconsistency may stem from personal or situational factors, yet the necessity for managers to cater to individual needs and embrace diversity remains crucial. Despite their less frequent application, such strategies are recognized for their importance in the administration of nursing practices, as highlighted by Hu et al. (2021). The "very good" rating reflects a recognition of their significance in promoting physical well-being, emotional stability, awareness of trends, cultural understanding, openness, and the fostering of positive interpersonal relationships. Consistent implementation of these strategies is associated with numerous benefits, including organizational growth (Aqtash et al., 2022), enhanced interdisciplinary collaborations (Ayeleke et al., 2019), improved quality of patient care (Drew & Pandit, 2020), and more effective communication within healthcare teams (Fernandez et al., 2020).

The t-test results reveal no significant difference in the mean competency level among young nurse business managers across five dimensions: personal conduct ($t = 0.110$), educational ($t = 0.104$), individual assessment ($t = 0.133$), culturally inclined ($t = 0.100$), and informatics tech ($t = 0.103$). The critical value of $t = 1.96$ exceeds all individual critical t-values, indicating no significant competency differences based on these dimensions. However, this contradicts previous research findings (Tallam et al., 2022; Tawalbeh, 2022), suggesting varying competency levels among nursing leaders. Maina et al. (2022) found that higher education levels, adherence to professional codes, and technological proficiency correlate with better performance. Despite minor competency differences, similar policies could enhance knowledge and skills among young nurse business leaders in both public and private sectors, given their comparable roles and functions (Asemahagn, 2020).

The results reveal that professional conduct competency scored highest among young nurse business managers, with an average mean of 3.35, denoting "excellent." Following closely were informatics tech (4.33), educational (4.13), individual assessment, and culturally inclined tech competencies, all averaging a "very good" rating at 4.04. The overall weighted mean across all participants (N = 117) was 4.18, also interpreted as "very good." These findings suggest that young nurse business managers excel in managing institutional resources, guided by professional codes of practice. They embrace challenges, take risks, and actively seek opportunities for personal and professional growth to meet evolving workforce and patient needs. This aligns with Jenkins et al.'s (2021) notion that nurse leaders are risk-takers who adapt practices to achieve desired outcomes and voice concerns hindering employee goals. Leaders depend on senior management support to navigate ambiguous situations and promote clarity, echoing sentiments from participants who highlighted organizational support for training and skill development. One participant noted, "All nurses must attend seminars and workshops paid for by management, enhancing skills and knowledge" (Interviewee "C"). Similarly, another mentioned, "Nurse leaders attend fully-funded training annually, translating to efficient resource management and quality service delivery" (Interviewee "E"). Reinforcing this, another participant shared, "I continuously attend training to improve my skills, enabling effective team leadership" (Interviewee "F"). The sentiments expressed by the participants appear to complement the results of previous studies which show that opportunities for young nurse business leaders to develop and enhance their competencies have crossover effects on employee/customer satisfaction (Arthur, 2023), organizational citizenship behavior (Dillard-Wright et al., 2020), quality service delivery (Orukwoku, 2022), nurse loyalty (Wahyuningrat & Rusmawan, 2022), and retention (Adams et al., 2021). Despite the multifaceted demands of nursing leadership, participants acknowledged their strong competency levels across dimensions, indicating a commitment to ongoing improvement. This proactive approach enables them to implement new policies and processes confidently, fostering job and employee engagement crucial for quality healthcare delivery.

Conclusions

The study conclusively demonstrates that young nurse business leaders need a broad spectrum of skills and competencies for effective performance in both their occupational and professional spheres. These crucial competencies—encompassing professional behavior, individual assessment capabilities, cultural awareness, technological proficiency, and educational expertise—are underscored in existing literature as essential for evaluating the performance and efficiency of emerging nursing leaders. However, the mere possession of these competencies is insufficient. Nursing leaders must engage in continuous learning and skill development through training programs, seminars, and other formal educational endeavors within the nursing field. Given the dynamic nature of the nursing profession, those in leadership and managerial roles must regularly update their knowledge and skills. This ongoing education is vital for them to adeptly manage their teams and navigate the challenges presented by the ever-evolving healthcare landscape.

Recommendations

Healthcare institutions should tailor leadership development programs to individual needs, offering flexibility, virtual components, and networking opportunities. Including personal growth, cultural sensitivity training, and technology integration aligns with identified competencies. Given the

underutilization of Individual Assessment Competency, institutions should prioritize its incorporation into leadership practices. Targeted workshops on self-reflection and decision-making can empower managers. Similarly, culturally-inclined competency should be emphasized, with tailored training on diversity, communication, and inclusive environments. Real-life case studies specific to the Philippine context can enhance practical application. By investing in culturally tailored initiatives, institutions can empower young nursing managers to leverage cultural insights and enhance leadership strategies, ultimately improving the administration of nursing practice in the Philippines.

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