Exploring Key Factors That Contribute to the Development of Nursing Competence

Takiko Imai, PhD
Takase Miyuki, PhD
Mitsuko Kawamoto, MSN
Kumiko Yamamoto, MSN
Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing, Yasuda Women’s University, Hiroshima, Japan

[Purpose] Having an adequate level of competence is important for nurses to provide safe and high-quality care to patients. While there is a large body of studies investigating the levels of nurses’ competence, a limited number of studies have examined factors contributing to its development. Moreover, there is a paucity of studies that have explored how these factors differ for nurses with different lengths of clinical experience. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to clarify the factors that contribute to the development of nursing competence among nurses with different lengths of clinical experience.

[Method] Questionnaires were sent to 522 Japanese nurses in October, 2016. The questionnaires contained demographic questions and an open-ended question asking nurses to identify the factors contributing to their competence development. The responses to the open-ended question were analyzed by text mining using SPSS’s PASW Modeler13, Text Mining for Clementine2.2 (TMC), and IBM SPSS Statistics 24 for Windows. In this analysis, nurses were classified into two groups: a less experienced group (nurses with clinical experience of < five years) and an experienced group (those with the experience of ≥ five years) to explore experience-based factors related to competence development. This study was approved by the Ethics Committee at Yasuda Women's University.

[Results] Of the 522 questionnaires sent, 253 were returned (a return rate 48.5%), with 240 effective responses. There were 73 less experienced nurses and 167 experienced nurses. The results showed that the words most frequently cited as the factors contributing to competence development by the less experienced group were “workplace environment,” followed by “ambition,” “knowledge,” “patient,” “communication,” “eagerness,” “experience,” “act,” “senior nurses”. Using cluster analysis, these words were classified into the following clusters: “action force,” “knowledge and skill” “learning from senior nurses” “educational system that brings out motivation for self-study” “enrichment of the workplace environment centered on human relations”. Similarly, the results showed that words most frequently cited by the experienced group were “workplace environment” followed by “learning/learn” “oneself” “ambition” “action/act” “experience” “patient” “knowledge” “colleague,” and “attitude.” Using cluster analysis, these words were classified into the following clusters: “medical team collaboration” “educational system that brings out motivational learning attitude” “enrichment of the workplace environment centered on human relations” and “reflection on oneself through dialogue with leaders/senior nurses”.

[Discussion] There are some similarities and differences in the factors contributing to competence development between less experienced and experienced nurses. A point they had in common was that both groups considered “workplace environment” to be the main factor contributing to the development of their competence. This result suggests that “enrichment of the workplace environment centered on human relations” facilitates nurses’ ambition to “learn” and acquire “knowledge”, regardless of the length of their experience. In other words, such an environment serves as a foundation for an “educational system that brings out motivation for self-study or learning attitudes”. Whereas both groups of nurses saw the work environment as the chief factor contributing to their competence development, the methods of workplace learning, which facilitates competence development, were different between them. The less experienced group considered learning from their own “experience”, “act”, and “senior nurses” as the main resources for their competence development. On the other hand, the experienced group considered learning through “medical team collaboration” and “reflection on oneself through dialogue with leaders/senior nurses” as important factors enhancing their competence. Specific methods of workplace learning...
learning may be encouraged for nurses with different lengths of clinical experience to develop their competence.

[Conclusion] The work environment, which facilitates workplace learning, was identified as the main factor that contributes to the development of competence for all nurses. However, the methods of workplace learning differed according to their length of clinical experience.

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Abstract Summary:
She earned her degrees in nursing in Japan. She has diverse clinical and academic experiences in Japan, and has served as an associate professor at Yasuda University since 2016. Her primary research interest lies in nursing education. She has published numerous papers, mainly, on nursing education (e.g., competence development).

Content Outline:
I. Introduction

While there is a large body of studies investigating the levels of nurses’ competence, a limited number of studies have examined factors contributing to its development. Moreover, there is a paucity of studies that have explored how these factors differ for nurses with different lengths of clinical experience. The purpose of the present study was to clarify the factors that contribute to the development of nursing competence among nurses with different lengths of clinical experience.
II. Body

Questionnaires were sent to 522 Japanese nurses. The responses to the open-ended question were analyzed by text mining. In this analysis, nurses were classified into two groups: a less experienced group (nurses with clinical experience of < five years) and an experienced group (those with the experience of ≥ five years) to explore experience-based factors related to competence development. As a result, there were some similarities and differences in the factors contributing to competence development between less experienced and experienced nurses. The main points were as follows.

A. Main Point #1

A point they had in common was that both groups considered “workplace environment” to be the main factor contributing to the development of their competence.

1. Supporting point #1

The results of analysis by text mining showed that the words most frequently cited as the factors contributing to competence development by both the less experienced group and the experienced group were “workplace environment”.

2. Supporting point #2

The results of analysis using cluster analysis showed that the common clusters as the factors contributing to competence development by both the less experienced group and the experienced group were “enhancement of the workplace environment centered on human relations”.

B. Main Point #2

As a difference, the less experienced group considered learning from their own “experience”, “act”, and “senior nurses” as the main resources for their competence development. On the other hand, the experienced group considered learning through “medical team collaboration” and “reflection on oneself through dialogue with leaders/senior nurses” as important factors enhancing their competence.

1. Supporting point #1

The results of analysis by text mining showed that the words most frequently cited as the factors contributing to competence development by the less experienced group were “workplace environment,” followed by “ambition,” “knowledge,” “patient” “communication” “eagerness” “experience” “act” “senior nurses”. Using cluster analysis, these words were classified into the following clusters: “action force,” “knowledge and skill” “learning from senior nurses” “educational system that brings out motivation for self-study” and “enhancement of the workplace environment centered on human relations”.

2. Supporting point #2

The results of analysis by text mining showed that words most frequently cited by the experienced group were “workplace environment” followed by “learning/learn” “oneself” “ambition” “action/act” “experience” “patient” “knowledge” “colleague,” and “attitude.” Using cluster analysis, these words were classified into the following clusters: “medical team collaboration” “educational system that brings out motivational learning attitude” “enhancement of the workplace environment centered on human relations” and “reflection on oneself through dialogue with leaders/senior nurses”.
III. Conclusion

The work environment, which facilitates workplace learning, was identified as the main factor that contributes to the development of competence for all nurses. However, the methods of workplace learning differed according to their length of clinical experience.

First Primary Presenting Author
Primary Presenting Author
Takiko Imai, PhD
Yasuda Women’s University
Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing
Associate Professor
Hiroshima
Japan

Professional Experience: 2016-present -- Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing, Yasuda Women’s University, Hiroshima, Japan 2012-15 -- Lecturer, Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health and Welfare, Prefectural University of Hiroshima, Hiroshima, Japan 2007-2010 -- Lecturer, National Institution, National Hospital Organization Okayama Medical Center, Okayama Nursing School, Okayama, Japan 1995-2001 -- Nurse, National Institution, National Hospital Organization Kure Medical Center, Hiroshima, Japan

Author Summary: Associate Professor at Yasuda Women’s University, Japan Associate Professor Takiko Imai earned her PhD in nursing in Japan. She has diverse clinical and academic experiences in Japan, and has served as an academic staff at Yasuda University since 2016. Her primary research interest lies in nursing education. She has published numerous papers, mainly, on nursing education (e.g., competence development) in Japan.

Second Author
Takase Miyuki, PhD
Yasuda Women’s University
Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing
Professor
Hiroshima
Japan

Professional Experience: 2015-present -- Professor, Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing, Yasuda Women’s University, Hiroshima, Japan 2009-14 -- Associate Professor, Institute of Biomedical & Health Science, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan 2006-08 -- Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, Tottori University, Tottori, Japan 2005 -- Research fellow at Deakin University, Australia 2001 -- Lecturer at La Trobe University, Australia

Author Summary: Professor at Yasuda Women’s University, Japan Professor Miyuki Takase earned her degrees in nursing and statistics in Australia. She has clinical and academic experiences both in Japan and Australia. Her primary research interests lie in how social, professional and organizational factors could impact upon nursing practice. She has also been investigating the factors, which contribute to the development of nursing competence. She has published numerous papers, mainly, on nursing management and education.

Third Author
Mitsuko Kawamoto, MSN
Yasuda Women’s University
Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing
Lecturer
Hiroshima
Japan

Professional Experience: 2014-present – Lecturer, Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing, Yasuda Women’s University, Hiroshima, Japan 1985-2013 -- Lecturer, National Public Services and Affiliated Personnel Mutual Aid Associations Kure Kyosai Hospital, Kure Kyosai Nursing School, Hiroshima, Japan 1985-2012 -- Nurse, National Public Services and Affiliated Personnel Mutual Aid Associations Kure Kyosai Hospital, Japan

Author Summary: Lecturer at Yasuda Women’s University, Japan Lecturer Mitsuko Kawamoto earned her master’s degree in nursing in Japan. She has diverse clinical and academic experiences in Japan, and has served as an academic staff at Yasuda’ University since 2013. Her primary research interest lies in nursing education. However, her interests also extend to other areas, such as nursing management.

Fourth Author
Kumiko Yamamoto, MSN
Yasuda Women’s University
Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing
Assistant Research Scientist
Hiroshima
Japan

Professional Experience: 2016-present – Assistant Research Scientist, Faculty of Nursing, School of Nursing, Yasuda Women’s University, Hiroshima, Japan 1990-2000 – Nurse (department of Pediatrics and gastroenterology), Hiroshima University Hospital, Japan

Author Summary: Assistant at Yasuda Women’s University, Japan Assistant Kumiko Yamamoto earned her master’s degree in nursing in Japan. She has diverse clinical and academic experiences in Japan, and has served as an academic staff at Yasuda’ University since 2013. Her primary research interest lies in nursing education. However, her interests also extend to other areas, such as pediatric nursing.