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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, WORKPLACE PROVISIONS, AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG DEPED NURSES IN NUEVA ECIJA, PHILIPPINES: A DESCRIPTIVE-CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: School nurses provide essential health services in educational settings, yet their professional development needs and workplace support may differ from those of hospital-based nurses. Evidence specific to Department of Education (DepEd) nurses in Nueva Ecija is limited. Objective: This study assessed professional development needs, perceived adequacy of workplace provisions, and job satisfaction among DepEd nurses in Nueva Ecija, and examined associations and selected group differences. Methods: A quantitative descriptive-correlational-comparative design was used. Total enumeration was applied to the eligible population across five schools divisions, and all 105 invited nurses returned completed questionnaires. Data were collected using a researcher-developed 60-item questionnaire adapted and contextualized from Candelario (2023), rated on a four-point scale. Five experts reviewed the instrument; reported content-validity indices were 1.00, and pilot-test Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .968 overall, .902 for professional development needs, .981 for workplace provisions, and .973 for job satisfaction. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, independent-samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA were used. Results: Personal and professional development had the highest professional development need score (M = 3.34, SD = 0.60), followed by safe and quality nursing care (M = 3.30, SD = 0.67), leadership and management (M = 3.24, SD = 0.60), and research (M = 3.09, SD = 0.66). Workplace provisions were rated adequate, with research provisions lowest (M = 2.71, SD = 0.70). Job satisfaction was generally positive; work-life balance scored highest (M = 2.95, SD = 0.59), while job promotion scored lowest (M = 2.66, SD = 0.73). Several professional-development domains were positively associated with management/leadership and research provisions. None of the 12 tested correlations between professional development needs and job satisfaction was statistically significant. Professional development needs differed by sex and school assignment in the reported analyses. Conclusion: Findings support a locally responsive professional development and workplace-support plan, with priorities in resilience, safe care, emergency preparedness, research capacity, recognition, and transparent career information. Inferential results involving age and years of service require verification against the original statistical output before publication.

KEYWORDS: *School Nursing; Continuing Professional Development; Workplace Provisions; Job Satisfaction; Deped Nurses; Philippines*

1. INTRODUCTION

Continuing professional development (CPD) enables nurses to maintain competence, respond to changing health needs, and provide safe and evidence-informed care. It is particularly relevant for nurses working in schools, where responsibilities extend beyond direct care to health education, prevention, referral coordination, and response to school-based emergencies. In the Philippines, nursing practice and continuing learning are situated within the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002 (Republic Act No. 9173), the Continuing Professional Development Act of 2016 (Republic Act No. 10912), and the Philippine Professional Nursing Practice Standards (PPNPS). These frameworks underscore professional accountability, continuing competence, and the importance of evidence-informed practice.

However, access to useful professional development depends not only on nurses' motivation but also on workplace conditions, including time, funding, administrative support, access to resources, and opportunities to apply new learning. School nurses may face distinct challenges because school health services operate within an education system rather than a hospital environment. Training that does not reflect school-based health responsibilities may be less relevant to their day-to-day practice. Workplace provisions—including supplies, emergency equipment, communication and referral systems, research support, and recognition—may also shape how effectively nurses can perform their roles.

Job satisfaction is similarly multidimensional. Compensation and benefits matter, but satisfaction may also reflect work-life balance, supportive relationships, recognition, and perceived opportunities for career advancement. For DepEd nurses, predictable school schedules may support work-life balance, while workload, resource limitations, and restricted promotion opportunities may remain concerns. The PPNPS provides a professional competency context for examining

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development needs, while Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring emphasizes the importance of supportive and respectful environments for nurses and the people they serve.

Despite the importance of these factors, context-specific evidence on DepEd nurses in Nueva Ecija is limited. This study therefore assessed their professional development needs, perceived adequacy of workplace provisions, and job satisfaction; examined relationships between professional development needs and the other two constructs; compared outcomes across selected demographic groups; and used the findings to inform an action plan. The study examined associations and group differences, not causal effects.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research design and setting

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational-comparative design. It was conducted among DepEd nurses in five schools divisions in Nueva Ecija, Philippines: Cabanatuan City, Gapan City, Muñoz City, San Jose City, and Nueva Ecija Division. The descriptive component summarized participant characteristics and the three study constructs; the correlational component examined professional development needs in relation to workplace provisions and, separately, job satisfaction; and the comparative component examined differences across selected profile groups.

2.2 Participants and sampling

Total enumeration was used for the accessible population of 105 eligible DepEd nurses in the five participating divisions. All 105 returned completed questionnaires, yielding a reported response rate of 100%. The study's findings are therefore specific to the participating nurses and divisions and should not automatically be generalized to school nurses in other provinces or employment settings.

2.3 Instrument and measures

Data were collected using a researcher-developed 60-item questionnaire adapted from Candelario (2023) and contextualized for DepEd nurses in Nueva Ecija. The questionnaire included demographic characteristics and three measured sections. Professional development needs covered safe and quality nursing care, leadership and management, personal and professional development, and research. Workplace provisions covered client care, management and leadership, and research. Job satisfaction covered compensation and benefits, work-life balance, and job promotion.

Items were rated on a four-point Likert scale. For professional development needs, higher scores indicated greater perceived need; for workplace provisions, higher scores indicated greater perceived adequacy; and for job satisfaction, higher scores indicated greater satisfaction. Five experts reviewed the instrument. The reported item-level content validity index and scale-level average content validity index were both 1.00. A pilot test with 15 nurses not included in the main study yielded Cronbach's alpha values of .968 for the full instrument, .902 for professional development needs, .981 for workplace provisions, and .973 for job satisfaction.

2.4 Data collection and ethics

Data collection began after approval from the Wesleyan University Research Ethics Board and permission from the participating DepEd Schools Division Offices and relevant administrators. Participants received an information sheet and informed-consent form. Questionnaires were administered online or in print depending on connectivity. Responses were coded, identifying information was stored separately, and analyses used anonymized data. The study reported compliance with applicable ethical requirements and the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

2.5 Statistical analysis

Frequencies and percentages were used to describe available demographic data. Means and standard deviations summarized domain scores. Pearson's product–moment correlation coefficient assessed relationships between professional development needs and workplace provisions and between professional development needs and job satisfaction. Independent-samples t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used for group comparisons, as appropriate. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha = .05$. The study did not test a direct correlation between workplace provisions and job satisfaction.

Publication note: The source thesis flags some age- and years-of-service inferential results as requiring confirmation against the original statistical output; these results are not presented as definitive in this manuscript. The exact post hoc procedure and assumption-test results should also be confirmed before submission.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Participant characteristics

The study included 105 DepEd nurses. The largest age group was 45 years and above (48.57%), and 80.00% were aged 35 years or older. Most respondents held a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (58.10%); 36.19% held a Master of Arts/Master of Science in Nursing degree, and 5.71% reported a PhD, DNP, or another advanced degree. Regarding service, 38.10% had 6–10 years and 36.19% had 1–5 years of service. Division Office assignment accounted for 38.10%, elementary schools 23.81%, and junior and senior high schools 19.05% each. Most respondents (92.38%) reported monthly income of ₱40,001 or above. The sample included 58 women (55.24%) and 47 men (44.76%).

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3.2 Professional development needs

Domain	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Personal and professional development	3.34	0.60	Very high need
Safe and quality nursing care	3.30	0.67	Very high need
Leadership and management	3.24	0.60	High need
Research	3.09	0.66	High need

Personal and professional development had the highest mean (M = 3.34, SD = 0.60); stress management and resilience was the highest-rated item (M = 3.42). In safe and quality nursing care, patient safety and quality improvement received the highest item mean (M = 3.41). Planning and managing school health programs was the highest-rated leadership and management item (M = 3.29), while identifying research problems relevant to school nursing was the highest-rated research item (M = 3.18). The pattern indicates perceived development needs across clinical, personal, leadership, and research domains.

3.3 Adequacy of workplace provisions

Workplace-provision domain	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Management and leadership	2.91	0.64	Adequate
Client care	2.84	0.66	Adequate
Research	2.71	0.70	Adequate

All three workplace-provision domains were rated adequate, but none reached the highly adequate category. In client care, referral systems and coordination with healthcare providers had the highest item mean (M = 2.96), while emergency response materials and equipment had the lowest (M = 2.72). In management and leadership, support from school administrators for nursing-related concerns was highest (M = 3.03), whereas recognition and appreciation of nurses' contributions was lowest (M = 2.74). Research provisions received the lowest domain score (M = 2.71); several indicators involving proposal development, time and resources, administrative encouragement, and collaboration opportunities each scored 2.70.

3.4 Job satisfaction

Job-satisfaction domain	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Work-life balance	2.95	0.59	Satisfied
Compensation and benefits	2.78	0.73	Satisfied
Job promotion	2.66	0.73	Satisfied

Respondents were generally satisfied across all three domains. Work-life balance had the highest mean (M = 2.95, SD = 0.59), and support from colleagues was the highest-rated item (M = 3.13). Compensation and benefits averaged 2.78 (SD = 0.73); DepEd benefits scored 2.89, while financial support for professional development scored 2.73. Job promotion had the lowest domain mean (M = 2.66, SD = 0.73). Merit- and competence-based promotion scored 2.76, whereas perceived opportunities for promotion within DepEd scored 2.57.

3.5 Relationships between professional development needs and workplace provisions

Professional-development domain	Client care r (p)	Management/leadership r (p)	Research provisions r (p)
Safe and quality nursing care	.147 (.134)	.255 (.009)*	.307 (.001)**
Leadership and management	.222 (.023)*	.298 (.002)**	.288 (.003)**
Personal and professional development	.157 (.110)	.208 (.034)*	.264 (.006)**
Research	.049 (.621)	.019 (.847)	.336 (< .001)**

Positive, statistically significant associations were observed for several domain pairs. Safe and quality nursing care needs were associated with management and leadership provisions (r = .255, p = .009) and research provisions (r = .307, p = .001). Leadership and management needs were associated with client care (r = .222, p = .023), management and leadership (r = .298, p = .002), and research provisions (r = .288, p = .003). Personal and professional development needs were associated with management and leadership (r = .208, p = .034) and research provisions (r = .264, p = .006). The strongest reported association was between research development needs and research provisions (r = .336, p

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< .001). Other pairings were not statistically significant. These associations do not establish directionality or causation.

*Note. N = 105. *p < .05; **p < .01. Values are reproduced from the thesis. The statistical output should be checked before final journal submission.*

3.6 Relationships between professional development needs and job satisfaction

None of the 12 correlations between the four professional-development domains and the three job-satisfaction domains was statistically significant (all p > .05). The reported coefficients ranged from r = −.160 to r = .128. Thus, the analyses did not provide evidence of a statistically significant linear association between perceived professional development needs and satisfaction with compensation and benefits, work-life balance, or job promotion in this sample.

3.7 Differences by respondent characteristics

The reported analyses indicated a difference in professional development needs by sex (t = −4.612, p < .001); the mean was 2.99 among women and 3.45 among men. Professional development needs also differed by school assignment (F = 4.248, p = .007), with the reported pairwise comparison identifying a difference between elementary and junior high school assignments. Workplace provisions and job satisfaction did not significantly differ by school assignment, and the reported comparisons found no significant differences by educational attainment or between the two populated monthly-income groups. The thesis explicitly identifies some results involving age and years of service as provisional because the reported F and p values need checking against the original statistical output; these are therefore not interpreted as definitive here.

4. DISCUSSION

Three principal findings emerge. First, respondents reported high or very high professional development needs across all four domains, with the strongest need in personal and professional development and safe, quality nursing care. The high rating for stress management and resilience points to the importance of supporting nurses' well-being alongside clinical competence. The patient-safety result reinforces the continuing need for practical, school-relevant learning in safe care and quality improvement. Leadership and research also remained important development areas, suggesting that school nursing development should extend beyond clinical procedures to program management and evidence-informed practice.

Second, workplace provisions were perceived as adequate but not highly adequate. Research support received the lowest domain mean, and several research-support items were among the lowest-rated indicators. This pattern is consistent with the observed association between research development needs and research provisions (r = .336, p < .001). Although this correlation does not establish causation, it suggests that professional learning in research should be considered alongside practical institutional supports such as mentoring, protected time, technical assistance, collaboration opportunities, and access to resources. Emergency-response equipment and recognition of nurses' contributions also emerged as areas for attention.

Third, respondents were generally satisfied with their jobs, particularly with work-life balance, but job promotion had the lowest satisfaction score. The relatively low rating for opportunities for promotion within DepEd suggests that clear communication about career pathways and qualification requirements may be useful. Financial support for professional development was also a comparatively lower-rated compensation-related indicator. These findings support an approach that combines training with workplace and career-development measures rather than assuming that training alone will improve job satisfaction.

The correlation analysis showed domain-specific relationships between professional development needs and workplace provisions, while none of the tested correlations between professional development needs and job satisfaction was significant. These findings should be interpreted narrowly: they do not show that professional development is unimportant, nor do they establish that workplace provisions have no relationship with job satisfaction, because that direct relationship was not tested. Instead, the results indicate that perceived development needs and job satisfaction behaved as distinct constructs in this sample.

Reported group differences in professional development needs by sex and school assignment may support monitoring disaggregated results and adapting some learning activities to assignment-specific responsibilities. They should not be interpreted as evidence that sex or assignment causes a higher need, nor should group averages be used to restrict access to training. In addition, statistical conclusions about age and years of service should not be finalized until the original output is checked. This is important because inconsistent inferential statistics can affect the validity of the conclusions and any action plan based on them.

4.1 Practical implications

DepEd division and school-level leaders may use the findings to prioritize a continuing professional development calendar that includes stress management and resilience, patient safety and quality improvement, emergency response, school health program management, and research skills. These activities should be supported by realistic scheduling, adequate materials, administrative coordination, recognition, research mentoring, and transparent information about career advancement. A common core program can be offered to all nurses, with additional learning activities tailored to school assignment and assessed needs.

4.2 Limitations

The study was cross-sectional and based on self-reported questionnaire data; it cannot establish causation or confirm actual competency through objective performance measures. Although all 105 eligible nurses in the five selected divisions responded, the findings may not generalize to nurses in other divisions or employment settings. The instrument was researcher-developed and adapted; its reported content validity and internal consistency are encouraging, but additional validation in independent samples

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would strengthen its evidence base. Some inferential findings involving age and years of service, and the exact post hoc procedure and assumption checks, require verification against the original statistical output before publication. The study also did not test the direct relationship between workplace provisions and job satisfaction.

5. CONCLUSION

DepEd nurses in the five participating divisions of Nueva Ecija reported substantial professional development needs, particularly in personal and professional development and safe, quality nursing care. Workplace provisions were generally considered adequate, but research support, emergency-response resources, and recognition of nurses' contributions require attention. Job satisfaction was generally positive, with work-life balance rated most favorably and job promotion least favorably. Several professional-development domains were significantly associated with management/leadership and research provisions, but no statistically significant associations were found between professional development needs and job satisfaction. The findings support a context-specific action plan that combines competency development with organizational support, research capacity-building, recognition, and career information. Before submission, all inferential results flagged in the thesis should be reconciled with the original statistical output.

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Conflicts of Interest
The author declares no conflict of interest.

Ethics approval and informed consent
The thesis reports approval from the Wesleyan University Research Ethics Board and permission from the participating DepEd Schools Division Offices. Participants provided informed consent. Insert the ethics approval/reference number if required by the target journal and available in the records.

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