

# Factors Influencing Nursing Performance of Clinical Nurses: Focusing Communication Competency and Job Satisfaction

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## Abstract

**Background/Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to identify factors influencing nursing performance of clinical nurses.

**Method/Statistical Analysis:** The participants were 187 clinical nurses. Data were collected from December, 2017 by questionnaire survey. Data analysis was done by using descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA, multiple logistic regression with the SPSS 23.0 program.

**Findings:** This study shows significant variables of age, marital status, education level, working pattern, position, salary, career of participants. The factors influencing with nursing performance were age, salary, communication competency and job satisfaction have a 52.0% explanatory power for the nursing performance of clinical nurses.

**Improvements/Applications:** This study confirmed that communication competency and job satisfaction were identified to improve nursing performance. Therefore we should develop programs in order to increase communication competency and job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Nurse, Nursing performance, Communication competency, Job satisfaction.

## Introduction

With the rapid development of modern society, the medical environment becomes more complicated and the hospital organization requires high-quality nursing with high level of expertise in various aspects<sup>[1]</sup>. The change caused the Nurses are considered highly essential medical personnel as they take care of patients for 24 hours<sup>[2]</sup> and nursing performance, which refers to nurses' fulfilment of their role in nursing organization with expertise, is the key requirement for improved

quality of care<sup>[3]</sup>. It is possible to induce the development and synchronization of nurses through evaluation of nursing performance to grasp the ability of nurses<sup>[4]</sup>. In this regard, poorer performance of nurses can lower individual work productivity, loss of motivation, indifference to the nursing subject, unkindness, and cause patient safety issues, thereby making it difficult to provide high quality care and hampering development of nursing profession<sup>[5]</sup>. As such, in order to find ways to enhance nursing performance, there should be continuous research on what affects it<sup>[6]</sup>. In terms of variables related to nursing performance, one of the previous studies which examined 92 hospice nurses in the U.S, found that communication competency affects nursing performance<sup>[7]</sup> and another observed communication competency is one of the biggest factors of nursing performance<sup>[3]</sup>. A number of studies stress principles of communication during nursing education

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or on the ground as an important element of effective nursing service, yet there has been little practical support to promote interactive skills among nurses within the health care system<sup>[8]</sup>. However, an effective communication of nurses can boost nursing performance by establishing a cooperative relationship with other medical staff and maximize job satisfaction of nurses<sup>[9]</sup>. Job satisfaction means a pleasant and positive emotional state that occurs when evaluating job experience with the attitude of having about one's work<sup>[10]</sup>. In fact, a content analysis study on nurses' job satisfaction<sup>[11]</sup> suggested that main factors of job satisfaction include a work environment that allows nurses to perform care services easily, as well as nurses' interpersonal relationship. If nurses are not satisfied with their job, they cannot perform their work effectively and make progress as professionals. Moreover, lower job satisfaction may end up undermining quality of patient care as it's also linked to organizational productivity<sup>[12]</sup>. Since patient care and treatment is the top priority at the clinical settings, it's vital to figure out what influences nursing performance. Positive interpersonal relationships and communication are the factors that increase job satisfaction. In the end, the efficiency of nursing work is improved and the performance and development of the organization is promoted<sup>[13]</sup>. As such, this study attempts to investigate the effect of clinical nurses' communication competency and job satisfaction on their nursing performance, thereby providing baseline data for measures to improve nursing performance of clinical nurses.

**Method**

**Research Design:** This study is descriptive survey research aimed at exploring clinical nurses' communication competency, job satisfaction and nursing performance, and investigating factors influencing nursing performance.

**Participants and data collection:** This study collected data from 191 clinical nurses working at a general hospital from December, 2017, who were informed of the purpose of this study and gave consent to participation, and ultimately data from 187.

**Communication Competency:** To measure the participants' individual communication competency, this study used the Global Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale (GICC), which was originally developed by<sup>[14]</sup> and complemented by<sup>[15]</sup>. In terms of

the tool's reliability<sup>[15]</sup> found Cronbach's alpha to be .72, whereas that in this study stood at .81.

**Job Satisfaction:** For job satisfaction, this study adopted the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) whose validity has been widely proved. The Research Institute at University of Minnesota suggested 100 detailed factors of job satisfaction, after excluding demographic factors and were later modified and complemented by<sup>[16]</sup>. While Cronbach's alpha in<sup>[16]</sup> was .89, that in this study turned out to be .88.

**Nursing performance:** To measure nursing performance, nursing performance measuring tool, developed by<sup>[17]</sup>. While<sup>[17]</sup> generated Cronbach's alpha of .92, Cronbach's alpha calculated in this study was .90.

**Data Analysis:** The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 23.0. The participants' communication competency, job satisfaction and nursing performance were examined by t-test, ANOVA, Scheffe's test and multiple logistic regression.

**Result**

**Communication competency, job satisfaction and nursing performance according to general characteristics of participants:** It was found that position (p=.002) and monthly income (p=.039) made significant difference in communication competency while job satisfaction was significantly affected by marital status (p=.049) and position (p=.007). In addition, age (p<.001), marital status (p<.001), education (p=.003), working pattern (p=.001), monthly income (p<.001) and career (p<.001) had significant impact on nursing performance[Table 1].

**Communication competency, job satisfaction and nursing performance perceived by participants:** On average, clinical nurses recorded 3.41±0.44 for communication competency, 3.35±0.43 for job satisfaction and 3.56±0.48 for nursing performance on a five-point scale [Table 2].

**Table 2. Communication Competency, Job Satisfaction and Nursing Performance**

Variables	M±SD
Communication Competency	3.41±0.44
Job Satisfaction	3.35±0.43
Nursing Performance	3.56±0.48

M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

**Table 1. Difference in Variables according to General Characteristics**

Characteristics	Categories	n(%) or M±SD	Communication Competency		Job Satisfaction		Nursing Performance	
			M±SD	t or F (p)	M±SD	t or F (p)	M±SD	t or F (p)
Age (Yr)		32.24±7.11						
	≤25	30(16.0)	3.33±0.40	0.99 (.399)	3.25±0.39	2.64 (.051)	3.23±0.39	14.34 (<.001)
	26-30	64(34.2)	3.37±0.46		3.26±0.42		3.43±0.40	
	31-35	40(21.4)	3.45±0.50		3.44±0.48		3.66±0.40	
≥36	53(28.3)	3.47±0.40	3.43±0.43		3.81±0.50			
Gender	Male	13(7.0)	3.42±0.43	0.43 (.966)	3.35±0.40	0.43 (.966)	3.39±0.37	-1.27 (.206)
	Female	174(93.0)	3.41±0.44		3.35±0.44		3.57±0.48	
Religion	Protestant	49(26.2)	3.42±0.41	0.11 (.956)	3.35±0.43	0.21 (.893)	3.69±0.49	2.37 (.072)
	Catholic	16(8.6)	3.46±0.35		3.40±0.43		3.61±0.47	
	Buddhist	24(12.8)	3.39±0.53		3.37±0.52		3.56±0.57	
	None	98(52.4)	3.40±0.45		3.33±0.42		3.48±0.43	
Marital status	Unmarried	112(59.9)	3.39±0.47	-0.89 (.375)	3.30±0.43	-1.98 (.049)	3.45±0.47	-3.85 (<.001)
	Married	75(40.1)	3.45±0.39		3.42±0.43		3.71±0.45	
Education level	Junior college <sup>a</sup>	67(35.8)	3.38±0.47	2.03 (.135)	3.32±0.41	0.71 (.495)	3.53±0.46	5.98 (.003) a,b<c
	Bachelor <sup>b</sup>	112(59.9)	3.41±0.42		3.35±0.46		3.53±0.46	
	≥Master <sup>c</sup>	8(4.3)	3.71±0.42		3.52±0.33		4.11±0.53	
Working pattern	3shifts	116(62.0)	3.39±0.46	-0.66 (.510)	3.30±0.43	-1.77 (.079)	3.46±0.42	-3.51 (.001)
	Day fixation	71(38.0)	3.44±0.40		3.42±0.43		3.71±0.52	
Position	Nurse <sup>a</sup>	148(79.1)	3.36±0.44	6.22 (.002) a<c	3.30±0.42	5.10 (.007) a<c	3.44±0.42	26.37 (<.001) a<b, a<c
	Charge nurse <sup>b</sup>	17(9.1)	3.56±0.35		3.53±0.47		3.91±0.40	
	Head nurse/manager <sup>c</sup>	22(11.8)	3.67±0.36		3.55±0.43		4.05±0.46	
Salary (10,000 won)	<300	156(83.4)	3.38±0.45	-2.08 (.039)	3.33±0.43	-1.44 (.151)	3.48±0.44	-5.52 (<.001)
	≥300	31(16.6)	3.56±0.38		3.45±0.47		3.96±0.44	
Working ward	Internal medicine	37(19.8)	3.47±0.46	0.31 (.873)	3.42±0.43	1.75 (.141)	3.57±0.50	1.44 (.223)
	Surgical	93(49.7)	3.39±0.42		3.27±0.42		3.49±0.45	
	ICU, ER	21(11.2)	3.43±0.51		3.36±0.51		3.58±0.54	
	OR	14(7.5)	3.44±0.36		3.55±0.41		3.72±0.47	
	Others	22(11.8)	3.35±0.48		3.38±0.39		3.70±0.47	
Career (Yr)		6.39±6.18		1.13 (.345)		1.78 (.134)		9.28 (<.001) a,b,c<e, a<d
	<1 <sup>a</sup>	31(16.6)	3.32±0.46		3.28±0.41		3.29±0.38	
	1-2 <sup>b</sup>	43(23.0)	3.36±0.42		3.27±0.44		3.43±0.39	
	3-4 <sup>c</sup>	17(9.1)	3.34±0.44		3.23±0.38		3.38±0.32	
	5-9 <sup>d</sup>	41(21.9)	3.46±0.47		3.39±0.44		3.61±0.48	
	≥10 <sup>e</sup>	55(29.4)	3.49±0.42		3.45±0.44		3.81±0.49	

M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation, ICU= Intensive Care Unit; ER= Emergency Room; OR= Operation Room

**Factors affecting participants' nursing performance:** Analysis results of factors that influenced the participants' nursing performance are presented in [Table 3]. Multiple logistic regression with general characteristics of the participants taken into

consideration showed that age (p=.004), monthly income (p=.023), communication competency (p<.001), and job satisfaction (p<.001) were factors that could affect nursing performance, and the four factors explained 52.0% of nursing performance.

**Table 3. Factors Influencing Nursing Performance**

Variables	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	.69	.29		2.40	.017
Age	.02	.01	.28	2.96	.004
Salary (1= $\geq$ 300)*	.18	.08	.14	2.29	.023
Communication Competency	.33	.06	.30	5.28	<.001
Job Satisfaction	.33	.06	.30	5.23	<.001
R <sup>2</sup> =.549, Adj R <sup>2</sup> =.520, F=19.34, p<.001					

## Discussion

In terms of communication competency, participants of this study scored an average of 3.41 out of 5, similar to the results of previous studies of [19]. It is also in line with the results of [20] that compared doctors and nurses in terms of communication competency and found that the former group recorded a higher score of 3.42 on average. The clinical nurses examined and those doctors showed similar scores for communication competency, which are higher than those of ordinary nurses, but this is because clinical nurses perceived their communication competency a little higher. As for communication competency according to general characteristics, the participants exhibited significant difference depending on their position and monthly income, which corresponds to the results of previous literature. For example, [18] found that higher position led to greater communication competency and [19], too, discovered charge nurses or those at a higher position recorded higher scores for communication competency than ordinary nurses. Taken altogether, these results indicate it's not easy to enhance communication competency and repetitive training and diverse work experiences can contribute to improvement of the competency. Returning to what this study found, while only position and monthly income made significant differences, older age and longer career also led to greater communication competency. It means there should be an intervention program for young and less experienced nurses as their perception of communication competency was low.

The participants of this study marked 3.35 out of 5 on average for job satisfaction, which is higher than 3.12 of [20] or 3.07 of [21]. Also, this study found that position at work was one of the significant variables to job satisfaction, which is in line with the results of [21]. As nurses become older and build more career, they get to learn more skills and know-hows through various experiences and, by working with those newly

acquired skills, not only patients but also the nurses themselves feel greater satisfaction with their work. Unfortunately, nurses at a number of hospitals are currently suffering chronic fatigue caused by labor shortage and heavy workload and facing much conflict in a bureaucratic organizational culture. The consequent reduction in job satisfaction makes it extremely difficult to improve nursing performance. Nevertheless, nursing organizations must introduce a system for better nursing performance where nurses can build capabilities and expertise so that they can become more satisfied with their work and enhance performance.

The participants in this study scored an average of 3.56 out of 5 for nursing performance, supported by [22]. Meanwhile, in terms of nursing performance according to general characteristics, this study observed significant difference made by several variables, including age, marital status, education, working pattern, position, monthly income and total career, which also corresponds to the findings of [22, 23]. From these results, it can be inferred that nurses has greater confidence and expertise as they get older, build more career, get more education and have higher position, thereby showing greater performance with their work. In addition, married participants recorded higher scores for nursing performance than the unmarried ones, and it seems attributable to social stability and confidence that married people experience thanks to emotional support and psychological peace they get from family even though they need to juggle work and family. Therefore, creating a working environment where nurses can get additional education and maintain their career can be suggested as another measure to boost nurses' job satisfaction and nursing performance.

As for correlations among clinical nurses' communication competency, job satisfaction and nursing performance as well as factors influencing them, this study found that the greater communication competency and job satisfaction the nurses had, the higher nursing performance they showed. When general characteristics of the participants were considered, communication competency and job satisfaction were the biggest influencing factors of nursing performance of clinical nurses, followed by age and monthly income. These results are supported by previous papers of [3], which reported communication competency and job satisfaction can affect nursing performance, respectively. As hospitals get larger in size and departmentalized further, nurses are required to carry

out more than conventional jobs. They now have to help patients recover from illnesses and maintain and improve health, plan and manage care services and educate families of patients and consult with them. This is why communication competency is emphasized for nurses. More importantly, nurses are the ones that form the most direct and sustainable relationship with medical consumers, or patients, and, thus, can determine how the consumers perceive medical services they get. In this sense, communication competency of nurses can make considerable influence not only on the efficiency, but also on the performance of hospital.

### Conclusion

It found that communication competency and job satisfaction can make effect on nursing performance. Based on these findings, various intervention programs must be developed to improve nurses' job satisfaction and boost their nursing performance so that they could provide comprehensive care as professional nurses. Furthermore, a training program should be provided for nurses to learn how to communicate in a clear and effective manner, and organizations must introduce a measure to promote horizontal and open communication for greater job satisfaction among nurses. As this study utilized measuring tools of communication competency, job satisfaction and nursing performance of nurses who are providing regular patient care at hospital, there is a need for a standardized measuring instrument with high reliability and validity for nurses who are working at a special department. Considering that appropriate education, training in communication competency and better working conditions can boost job satisfaction, the results of this study can serve as baseline data for development of strategies to enhance nursing performance of clinical nurses.

**Ethical Clearance:** Not required

**Source of Funding:** Self

**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

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