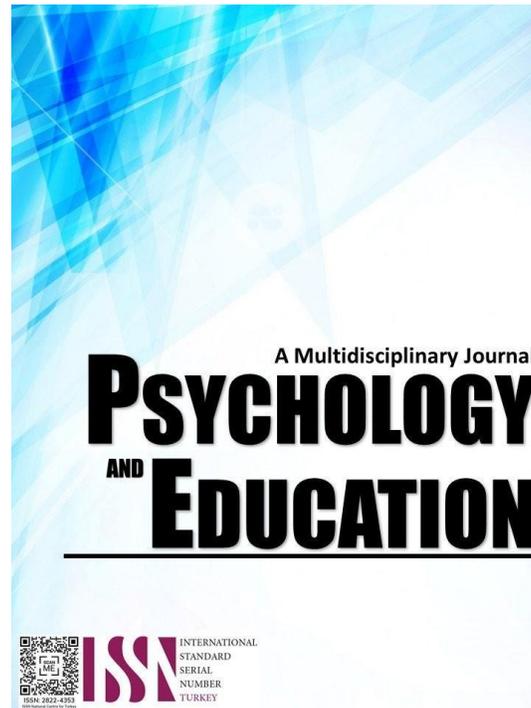


PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF TRIAGE NURSES IN SELECTED GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS IN EASTERN PANGASINAN



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Professional Competencies of Triage Nurses in Selected Government Hospitals in Eastern Pangasinan

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Abstract

The study evaluated emergency room nurses' professional competencies concerning their triage duties. The researchers collected demographic information about the participants and employed a descriptive research method. Data was gathered using survey questionnaires. Various statistical tools were used for analysis, including frequency and percentage, weighted mean (WM), overall weighted mean (OWM), grand overall weighted mean (GOWM), ANOVA, t-test, and Pearson's *r* coefficient of correlation. The study found that the nurses surveyed were young adults, with an equal number of men and women. All had Bachelor's degrees, and most worked as staff nurses with an average of four years of experience. They also received sufficient training in emergency nursing. Regarding clinical skills in triage, nurses performed best in health education, safe care, and teamwork. They demonstrated significant challenges in comprehending legal accountability, executing advanced triage decision-making, and applying more comprehensive health assessment. The research showed no significant differences in clinical competencies among the nurses based on their background, except for years of service. Additionally, there were no significant connections between the nurses' professional skills and their background information. This means that a nurse's professional skills in triage do not depend on their demographic details. We propose a program to boost triage competencies among emergency room nurses to improve the identified skill gaps. This program focuses on strengthening key skill areas necessary for practical emergency nursing.

Keywords: *professional competencies, triage, nurses, emergency room*

Introduction

The most unique health care environment that cares for people is the emergency room. It serves as a vital access point for medical care for people who are suffering, and it is a station for those in need of crisis intervention. Triage is the process of prioritizing patients for healthcare services based on the severity of the disease or injury to perform the best treatment intervention for the most people in the shortest possible time. Triage is an inseparable part of emergency management in hospitals and an important indicator in the assessment and accreditation of Emergency Room (ER) services, since the accuracy of triage decisions can affect ER achievements. Accurate and quick triage of patients is a key factor in the successful performance of emergency departments. If triage is done without the necessary skills and knowledge, the patients are misclassified. The effectiveness of triage systems lies in the professional knowledge and clinical skills of the ER staff, including nurses. The nurses are the main triage operators in ERs and play an important role in prioritizing the needs of the patients who are in critical condition.

The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) states that triage nurses should have capabilities like professional knowledge, clinical experience, communication skills, critical thinking, patient health assessment skills, clinical decision-making, teamwork, and mental and physical capability to work in stressful conditions to have an effective function. Triage nurses have a crucial role in determining and prioritizing the needs of patients with life-threatening conditions requiring immediate attention. It is important to pay attention to the professional capability of ER nurses for optimal care delivery (Aghabarary et al., 2023).

The goal of triage is to rapidly identify and sort patients, a critical responsibility for ensuring each patient receives the access and care that aligns with their situation, while appropriately allocating department resources. It is a challenging task for even the most experienced clinical professionals. While consistency at triage certainly impacts patient outcomes, the triage process can also affect productivity metrics, liability exposure, patient experience, and nursing attrition rates. Triage competency assessment is a dynamic process with periodic assessment of all nurses who practice this high-risk skill. A qualified triage nurse should also have: a) the ability to make rapid decisions, b) a diverse knowledge of a wide variety of presenting complaints, c) excellent communication skills, d) positive customer service skills, e) the ability to conduct brief, focused assessments, g) the ability to collaborate, and h) the ability to multitask. In the emergency care environment, nurses' complete baseline and ongoing education as well as assessment of knowledge and skill in many areas. Examples of these include advanced cardiac life support, use of the fingerstick glucose monitor, and trauma nursing core curriculum. The role of the triage nurse is the most commonly performed nursing function. It helps the nurse to identify methods used to validate triage competency. There are essential elements for successful triage competency processes. A strong foundation of triage knowledge is imperative in order for the nurse to have a successful application in making triage decisions (Cohen, 2020).

Triage is the first step in providing prompt and appropriate emergency nursing and addressing diagnostic issues. Rapid clinical reasoning skills of emergency nurses are essential for prompt decision-making and emergency care. Nurses experience limitations in emergency nursing that begin with triage. Triage is the initial step in emergency nursing, in which patients are classified based on their urgency and severity, determining the priority of treatment, and enabling efficient emergency interventions. Globally, 76.5–91% of

trriages are performed by general nurses in emergency departments. However, triage errors, such as over- or under-triaging, can occur and potentially increase disease severity and mortality rates. Daily auditing and monitoring have been shown to reduce triage error rates and improve consistency with doctors' opinions as well as proficiency in triage. This underscores the importance of continuous experiential education for nurses pursuing professional growth (Oh & Jung, 2024).

Nursing activities in the Emergency department include triage, initial assessment, management of acute and critical patients as a team member, and treating injuries that threaten a patient's life. The need for emergency care services is predicted to remain high, as seen by the crowding phenomenon in emergency departments. This has impacted the decreasing quality of both care and treatment, the increased adverse event rate, and the increased mortality rate in the Emergency Department (Trisyani et al., 2023).

In the article of the Nursing Carousel and Nursing Allied Health (2024), it cited that when a patient arrives seeking emergency medical care, the triage nurse is responsible for obtaining a brief history about their health complaint, assessing their vital signs, and conducting a focused physical exam. Based on this rapid evaluation, the triage nurse assigns an acuity level to the patient, prioritizing those with life-threatening conditions to be seen immediately. Triage nurses use emergency severity indexes or similar triage algorithms to categorize patients appropriately. For example, a patient having a heart attack or stroke needs to be prioritized for immediate medical attention, while a patient with an ankle sprain may safely wait. Throughout the triage process, nurses explain what is happening and keep patients informed. Effective communication helps calm anxious patients and families in stressful situations. Excellent communication is vital for triage nurses. They must gather information from patients quickly and efficiently, listening carefully to understand the chief complaint. Triage nurses must rapidly assess situations and determine the priority level for each patient. Remaining calm under pressure and managing one's own emotions are crucial skills.

Aghabarary et al. (2023) conducted a study on the professional capability of triage nurses. The professional capability of triage nurses was at a moderate level. The results of multiple linear regression analysis showed that 5 factors, including participation in educational courses, having clinical experience and specialized knowledge in the emergency department, error registry and assessment system, managers' support, and recruiting experienced staff, affected the nurses' professional capability. The triage nurses had moderate levels of professional capability. It is necessary that nursing managers develop effective plans to improve the professional capability of triage nurses in emergency departments to enhance the quality and effectiveness of emergency services. Triage nurses are prepared to take care of foreseeable emergencies, skilled at identifying life-threatening problems, prioritizing the urgency of care, and rapidly and effectively carrying out resuscitative measures and other treatments.

Moreover, the study of Segura et al. (2017) revealed that competency scores were significantly higher in nurses with training in critical patient care and triage and in those with longer emergency department experience. Perceived confidence when performing triage increased with competency score and training in critical patient care and triage. It concluded that the competence of triage nurses and their perception of confidence when performing triage increases with emergency department experience and training.

The effective and accurate emergency triage and appropriate care are essential factors to reduce the complications and death rates among patients suffering medical emergencies. An accurate and rapid triage plays a significant role for emergency nurses to provide appropriate care in each emergency, and to distance every patient in a timely manner. The roles of emergency nurses are as follows: code nurses, triage nurses, disaster nurses, critical care nurses, transport personnel nurses, pediatric and geriatric emergency nurses, hare nurses, and military nurses. The most important competency of an emergency nurse is the ability to perform a precise and fast triage for emergency patients. The emergency nurses must be able to prioritize and categorize the patients' conditions, such as who needs priority treatment or who should wait. This should improve the quality of the emergency care, decrease risks from complications and disabilities, and reduce death rates. In addition, this will increase patients' and families' satisfaction as well as reduce the cost of medical care (Petlamull, 2020).

According to the World Health Organization, health education is an important strategy for health promotion that is essential for improving people's health and encouraging health investments. However, this has not received the necessary attention. The lack of interest stems from various causes, including a lack of awareness among health professionals and the difficulties that health educators face in translating efficiency into good results for their practice. Effective health education in the ER poses many challenges for nurses (Sali, 2022).

Overcrowding and long waiting times remain perennial issues in many emergency departments globally, resulting in unsafe and inefficient care. To facilitate the treatment of patients who arrive in the Emergency Department, a triage process is often implemented. Triage enables the Emergency Department staff to prioritize patient care so that patients requiring more immediate care are seen first. This study described the competence and critical thinking ability of triage nurses in a selected hospital in Lipa City, Batangas, Philippines. Results showed that decision-making competency is significantly different among different age groups. Respondents' critical thinking ability based on objectivity, healthy skepticism, systematicity, intellectual fairness, intellectual curiosity, self-confidence, and prudence was at a moderate level. Participants had a moderate level of critical thinking ability while doing triage. Over-all decision-making ability significantly increased with age and years of experience. Furthermore, objectivity, self-confidence, prudence and over-all critical thinking ability are significantly associated with age. Moreover, the triage nurses' decision-making skills can be greatly influenced by their critical thinking ability (Comia et al., 2023).

Given that the researcher is assigned in the emergency department of the hospital, she was interested in determining the extent of professional competencies among triage nurses as a basis for a proposed enhancement program among triage nurses.

Research Questions

This study determined the extent of professional competencies among triage nurses in the emergency room in selected government hospitals in Eastern Pangasinan. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the triage nurses in terms of:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. sex;
 - 1.3. civil status;
 - 1.4. highest educational attainment;
 - 1.5. position;
 - 1.6. number of years assigned in the ER; and
 - 1.7. number of relevant trainings on triage?
2. What is the extent of professional competencies among triage nurses in the emergency room along:
 - 2.1. legal responsibility;
 - 2.2. clinical competence in triage;
 - 2.3. patient health assessment skills;
 - 2.4. collaboration and teamwork;
 - 2.5. safe and quality care; and
 - 2.6. health education?
3. Is there a significant mean difference in the professional competencies of triage nurses and their profile variables?
4. Is there a significant relationship in the professional competencies of triage nurses and their profile variables?
5. What proposed enhancement program could be developed and implemented to improve the competencies of triage nurses?

Methodology

Research Design

The study will utilize a descriptive-correlational method of research design. This design describes the variables and the relationships that occur naturally between and among them. A descriptive correlational method or design refers to a type of study in which information is collected without making any changes to the study subject. This means that the researcher cannot directly interact with the environment in which he is studying in a way that would cause any changes related to the study. The descriptive-correlational method is used in research studies that aim to provide static pictures of situations and establish the relationship between different variables (McBurney & White, 2019). The design appropriate for the topic mentioned is the ex post facto one-shot case study. The research design is shown schematically as follows: XO, where X is the assumed exposure of the respondent nurses to conditions surrounding the duties of triage by the emergency room nurses. O Observation or measurement made in the phenomenon being studied (Meimban & Meimban, 2023).

The study design would also enable the researcher to determine changes in the participants' knowledge and attitudes over time in order to determine how these changes affect the outcomes or possible trends that could emerge in the future (Monsen & Horn, 2019)

Respondents

The population of the study will be the nurses in the triage areas in government hospitals in Eastern Pangasinan. The study will be conducted during the Second Semester of the Academic Year 2024-2025. It is composed of 50 respondents from selected government health facilities. To have a good representation of the population, this study utilized a combination of purposive and convenience sampling. It will be strictly delimited to respondents assigned in the triage areas.

Instrument

The study will utilize a survey questionnaire to determine the extent of professional competencies on triage among nurses in different health facilities in Eastern Pangasinan. The tool was based on related studies and articles related to the problem. Part I deals with the Independent Variables that include the profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, number of years assigned in the triage area, and number of relevant trainings on triage. Part II focuses on the Dependent variables on the extent of professional competencies of triage nurses, along with legal responsibility, clinical competence skills on triage, patient health assessment skills, collaboration and teamwork, safe and quality care, and health education.

Procedure

Prior to the gathering of data, the researcher asked permission from the Dean of the Institute of Graduate and Advanced Studies to conduct the study. When permission was granted from the Institute of Graduate and Advanced Studies, the researcher requested and

coordinated with the different government health facilities in Eastern Pangasinan. After securing consent from the different health facilities, the researcher secured consent from the respondents. The questionnaire was given to the respondents for them to answer the questions, and the responses were retrieved and tallied by the researcher for analysis and interpretation.

Data Analysis

For problem No.1 on the respondent's profile, frequency and percentage were used. The frequency was determined based on the number of respondents who answered or checked a particular item on the questionnaire. For problem No. 2 on the extent of professional competencies of triage nurses, the weighted mean will be used. The weighted mean is the mean of a set of values wherein each value or measurement has a different weight or degree of importance. Parts III and IV on the significant mean difference and relationship, Analysis of Variance and Pearson-r Correlation Coefficient will be used to investigate the strength of the association between two quantitative variables

Results and Discussion

This section presents the tabulation of the information gathered, with the corresponding evaluation and elucidation of the study regarding the competencies of nurses in the triage.

Respondent's Profile

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, position, number of years in the emergency room, and number of relevant seminars/ trainings on triage.

Age. It can be gleaned from the table that majority of the respondents are in the age bracket of 31-40 years old with a frequency of 29 or 58 percent followed by 21-30 years old with a frequency of 12 or 24 percent, those 41-50 years old with a frequency of 7 or 14 percent and those 51 years old and above with a frequency of 2 or 4 percent. It revealed that the respondents were young adults. According to Erikson, 31-40 years old are considered young adults. Young adults need to form relationships with other people.

Sex. The respondent nurses were equally divided into females with a frequency of 25 or 50 percent, and followed by males with a frequency of 25 or 50 percent. It showed that both respondents were of the same number during the data gathering.

Civil status. The majority of the respondents were married, with a frequency of 32 or 64 percent, followed by singles with a frequency of 18 or 26 percent. It revealed that the respondents have their own families and children to attend.

Table 1. *Distribution of Respondents in terms of their Profile Variables*

<i>Profile Variables</i>	<i>Frequenc y</i>	<i>Percentag e</i>
Age (in years)		
21 – 30	12	24.0
31 – 40	29	58.0
41 – 50	7	14.0
51 and above	2	4.0
Sex		
Male	25	50.0
Female	25	50.0
Civil Status		
Single	18	26.0
Married	32	64.0
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	37	74.0
With Master's units	10	20.0
Master's Degree	3	6.0
Position		
Staff Nurse	45	90.0
Nurse Supervisor	2	4.0
Head Nurse	3	6.0
Number of Years Assigned in the ER		
1 – 2	31	62.0
3 – 4	10	20.0
5 and above		18.0
Number of Relevant Trainings on Triage	9	
1 – 2	18	36.0
3 – 4	6	12.0
5 and above	26	52.0

Highest educational attainment. It revealed that the majority of the respondents were bachelor's degree holders with a frequency of 37 or 74 percent, followed by those with masteral units with a frequency of 10 or 20 percent, and MAN graduates with a frequency of 3 or 6 percent. It showed that the majority did not pursue a higher level of learning. This might be related to the fact that their salaries are not competitive, so some nurses fail to enroll in the master's or doctoral programs.

Position. It can be gleaned from the table that the majority of the respondents were staff nurses with a frequency of 45 or 90 percent, head nurses with a frequency of 3 or 6 percent, and nurse supervisors with a frequency of 2 or 4 percent. It revealed that staff nurses comprised mostly of the clinical area compared to the head nurses and supervisors.

Number of years in service in the emergency room. It showed that most respondents were in the service for 1-2 years, with a frequency of 31 or 62 percent, 3-4 years, with a frequency of 10 or 20 percent, and 5 years and above, with a frequency of 9 or 18 percent. It revealed that the respondents had been in the service for different numbers of years, and most had been in the service for a few years.

Number of relevant trainings in triage. It showed that the majority of the respondents had undergone triage training more than 5 times, with a frequency of 26 or 52 percent, 1-2 times with a frequency of 18 or 36 percent, and 3-4 times with a frequency of 6 or 12 percent. It revealed that the respondents had undergone adequate training related to triage. According to the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA), triage nurses should have capabilities like professional knowledge, clinical experience, communication skills, critical thinking, patient health assessment skills, clinical decision-making, teamwork, and mental and physical capability to work in stressful conditions to have an effective function.

Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along with Legal Responsibility

Table 2 presents the extent of professional competency among triage nurses along with legal responsibility. It revealed that all the respondents rated all indicators as "Very Extensive," however, the highest are items 8, and 4, "use established communication protocols within the health care agency, across agencies and health system," and "practice with professional values" with a weighted mean of 4.84, and 4.86, or "Very Extensive." It revealed that the emergency room nurses practiced what is considered legal in the workplace, like practicing proper protocols and having the right values. As cited by the Nursing Carousel and Nursing Allied Health (2024), triage nurses must rapidly assess situations, implement protocols, and determine the priority level for each patient. Remaining calm under pressure and managing one's own emotions are crucial skills.

The lowest item is number 2, "practice with acts governing nursing practice, the regulatory body's standards for nursing and guidelines for the scope of nursing practice" with a weighted mean of 4.62 or "Very Extensive" It showed that the nurses were aware of the nursing law on the scope of nursing practice. As specified in Section 28 of RA 9173 or the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002, a person shall be deemed to be practicing nursing within the meaning of this Act when he/she singly or in collaboration with another, initiates and performs nursing services to individuals, families, and communities in any health care setting.

Table 2. *Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along with Legal Responsibility*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>WM</i>	<i>DR</i>	<i>TR</i>
1. Validate data with the client and or significant.	4.82	A	VE
2. Practice with acts governing nursing practice, the regulatory body's standards for nursing, and guidelines for the scope of nursing practice.	4.68	A	VE
3. Practice with common law and legislation that directs quality nursing.	4.74	A	VE
4. Practice with professional values.	4.84	A	VE
5. Updated in terms of my professional license and other required trainings needed in triage	4.80	A	VE
6. Practice with principles of safety and the obligation to take action.	4.78	A	VE
7. Advocate for the client or client's representative, especially when the client is unable to advocate for themselves, like when he/she is mentally incapacitated.	4.82	A	VE
8. Use established communication protocols within the health care agency, across agencies, and the health system.	4.86	A	VE
9. Make sure the environment is conducive to safe, competent, and ethical care.	4.82	A	VE
10. Support the client to draw on their own assets and resources in meeting self-care needs.	4.78	A	VE
Average Weighted Mean	4.79	A	VE

Legend: 4.50–5.00: Always (A) – Very Extensive (VE); 3.50–4.49: Often (O) – Extensive (E); 2.50–3.49: Sometimes (S) – Moderately Extensive (ME); 1.50–2.49: Seldom (Sl) – Slightly Extensive (SE); 1.00–1.49: Never (N) – Not Extensive (NE).

Overall, on the extent of professional competence on triage among ER nurses along legal responsibility got average weighted mean of 4.79 or "Very Extensive" It showed that the nurses had the proper orientation and knowledge on the law that regulate nursing in the Philippines which is the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002. In the practice of nursing in all settings, the nurse is duty-bound to observe the Code of Ethics for nurses and uphold the standards of safe nursing practice.

Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along Clinical Competence on Triage

Table 3 presents the extent of professional competency among triage nurses along clinical competence on triage. It revealed that all the respondents rated all indicators as "Very Extensive", however the highest are items 6 and 7 "to prepare to take care of foreseeable emergencies, skilled at identifying life-threatening problems" and "to prioritize the urgency of care" with a weighted mean of 4.92, or

“Very Extensive” It revealed that the nurses were equipped with the skills needed in a triage as a requirement of the nurse in the emergency room. As mentioned by Wolf (2025), a competent triage nurse possesses the ability to rapidly assess patients, make quick, accurate clinical decisions based on focused assessments, prioritize care, effectively communicate with patients and healthcare team members, and manage multiple patients simultaneously, all while maintaining a calm and reassuring demeanor in a high-pressure environment. The lowest item is number 1 “the ability to make quick decisions” with a weighted mean of 4.78 or “Very Extensive” It showed that the nurses apply their decision making in the area because they are dealing between life and death. According to Wolf, et al., (2025), a competent triage nurse possesses the ability to rapidly assess patients, make quick, accurate clinical decisions based on focused assessments, prioritize care, effectively communicate with patients and healthcare team members, and manage multiple patients simultaneously, all while maintaining a calm and reassuring demeanor in a high-pressure environment.

Table 3. *Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along with Clinical Competence on Triage (n=50)*

Indicators	WM	DR	TR
1. The ability to make quick decisions	4.78	A	VE
2. The ability to conduct brief focused assessments	4.82	A	VE
3. Rapidly carry out orders on resuscitative measures and other treatments	4.80	A	VE
4. The preparedness on foreseeable emergencies	4.80	A	VE
5. The skill in identifying life threatening conditions or problems	4.86	A	VE
6. To prepare to take care of foreseeable emergencies, skilled at identifying life-threatening problems	4.92	A	VE
7. To prioritize the urgency of care	4.92	A	VE
8. To attend to the most injured and most able to be helped as the first priority	4.88	A	VE
9. To assess several signs at the same time.	4.86	A	VE
10. To ensure patients receive the correct type and level of care for optimal satisfaction and well-being.	4.88	A	VE
Average Weighted Mean	4.85	A	VE

Legend: 4.50–5.00: Always (A) – Very Extensive (VE); 3.50–4.49: Often (O) – Extensive (E); 2.50–3.49: Sometimes (S) – Moderately Extensive (ME); 1.50–2.49: Seldom (Sl) – Slightly Extensive (SE); 1.00–1.49: Never (N) – Not Extensive (NE).

Overall, on the extent of professional competence on triage among ER nurses, along with clinical competence on triage, got an average weighted mean of 4.85 or.” It showed that the nurses had the clinical competence to handle cases in the triage areas. Also as mentioned by Wolf et al., (2025), a competent triage nurse possesses the ability to rapidly assess patients, make quick, accurate clinical decisions based on focused assessments, prioritize care, effectively communicate with patients and healthcare team members, and manage multiple patients simultaneously, all while maintaining a calm and reassuring demeanor in a high-pressure environment.

Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along with Health Assessment Skills

Table 4 presents the extent of professional competency among triage nurses in health assessment skills.

It revealed that all the respondents rated all indicators as “Very Extensive”, however, the highest are items 9, and 10, “the critical thinking skills and expertise” and “to establish what kind of care patients needs ensuring they are sent to the right referral health facility” with a weighted mean of 4.90, or “Very Extensive” It revealed that the nurses had the critical thinking skills to make decisions when the patient needs a higher facility for treatment. As cited by Oh and Jung 2024, triage is the first step in providing prompt and appropriate emergency nursing and addressing diagnostic issues. According to Oh and Jung (2024), rapid clinical reasoning skills of emergency nurses are essential for prompt decision-making and emergency care. The lowest item is number 1 and 7 “the physical capability to work in stressful condition” and “to check for signs of serious illness or injury” with a weighted mean of 4.84 or “Very Extensive” It showed that the nurses can give the best care even in stressful condition because it is part of their job to attend in emergency cases. According to Trisyani et al.2023, nursing activities in the Emergency department include triage, initial assessment, management of acute and critical patients as a team member, and treating injuries that threaten a patient’s life.

Table 4. *Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along with Health Assessment Skills (n=50)*

Indicators	WM	DR	TR
1. The physical capability to work in stressful conditions	4.84	A	VE
2. Diverse knowledge of a wide variety of presenting complaints	4.86	A	VE
3. To prioritize the urgency of care	4.88	A	VE
4. To provide basic intervention skills like infection control, pain management, and stabilization of airway, breathing, and circulation	4.88	A	VE
5. The emotional resilience and being calm even under pressure	4.86	A	VE
6. To immediately identify and sort patients	4.88	A	VE
7. To check for signs of serious illness or injury	4.84	A	VE
8. To listen effectively, have excellent communication skills, and offer individualized and appropriate advice	4.88	A	VE
9. The critical thinking skills and expertise	4.90	A	VE
10. To establish what kind of care patients need, ensuring they get sent to the right referral health facility	4.90	A	VE



Average Weighted Mean	4.87	A	VE
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Legend: 4.50–5.00: Always (A) – Very Extensive (VE); 3.50–4.49: Often (O) – Extensive (E); 2.50–3.49: Sometimes (S) – Moderately Extensive (ME); 1.50–2.49: Seldom (SI) – Slightly Extensive (SE); 1.00–1.49: Never (N) – Not Extensive (NE).

Overall, on the extent of professional competence on triage among ER nurses, along with health assessment skills, the average weighted mean was 4.87 or “Very Extensive.” It showed that the nurses were equipped with the skills to assess their patients. According to Kerie (2018), in triage, an emergency room nurse's key health assessment skill is the ability to rapidly evaluate a patient's condition by gathering critical information like vital signs, chief complaint, level of consciousness, and potential life-threatening symptoms to determine the urgency of their situation and prioritize care accordingly.

Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along with Collaboration and Teamwork

Table 5 presents the extent of professional competency among triage nurses in collaboration and teamwork.

It revealed that all the respondents rated all indicators as “Very Extensive”, however the highest are item 4 “maintain good interpersonal relationship interagency and intra agency” with a weighted mean of 4.98, or “Very Extensive” It revealed that the nurses had the competence in working with other members of the health team. As cited by Aghabarary et al. 2023, triage nurses should have capabilities like professional knowledge, clinical experience, communication skills, critical thinking, patient health assessment skills, clinical decision-making, teamwork, and mental and physical capability to work in stressful conditions to have an effective function.

The lowest item is number 8, “assess clients’ participatory capacity,” with a weighted mean of 4.82 or “Very Extensive.” It showed that the nurses openly communicate with the patient or watchers in case he is conscious to gain his cooperation. According to Vorvick (2023), effective communication with patients in healthcare involves actively listening to their concerns, using clear and understandable language, showing empathy, establishing a trusting relationship, and ensuring they comprehend medical information through techniques like "teach-back" to confirm understanding, all while respecting their individual needs and perspectives.

Table 5. *Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along with Collaboration and Teamwork (n=50)*

Indicators	WM	DR	TR
1. Establish collaborative relationships with colleagues and other members of the triage team to enhance nursing and other health services	4.94	A	VE
2. Utilize appropriate mechanism for networking, linkage building and referrals	4.94	A	VE
3. Address issues and conflicts as an option for collaboration and shared responsibility for decision making by generating new ways of analyzing situations or problems	4.94	A	VE
4. Maintain good interpersonal relationships, interagency and intra-agency	4.98	A	VE
5. Arrange referrals to specialty hospitals when needed by clients	4.96	A	VE
6. Carry out appropriate strategies to ensure the participation of client	4.96	A	VE
7. Articulate commitment and opportunities for community involvement on health resource availability, access/use	4.96	A	VE
8. Assess clients’ participatory capacity	4.92	A	VE
9. Respect the role of other members of the health team	4.96	A	VE
10. act as advocate/liaison of the client during decision making by the interprofessional team	4.96	A	VE
Average Weighted Mean	4.95	A	VE

Legend: 4.50–5.00: Always (A) – Very Extensive (VE); 3.50–4.49: Often (O) – Extensive (E); 2.50–3.49: Sometimes (S) – Moderately Extensive (ME); 1.50–2.49: Seldom (SI) – Slightly Extensive (SE); 1.00–1.49: Never (N) – Not Extensive (NE).

Overall, on the extent of professional competence on triage among ER nurses along collaboration and teamwork got an average weighted mean of 4.95, or “Very Extensive” It showed that the nurses work well with the healthcare team since they have one goal which is to heal the patient the safest way. According to Cohen (2020), nurses have the ability to conduct brief, focused assessments, the ability to collaborate, and the ability to multi-task.

Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along Safe and Quality Care

Table 6 presents the extent of professional competency among triage nurses along safe and quality care. It revealed that all the respondents rated all indicators as “Very Extensive”, however the highest are item 3 “modify interventions to suit client’s situation by selecting interventions that are consistent with client’s identified concerns and priorities” with a weighted mean of 4.99, or “Very Extensive.” It revealed that the nurses perform the necessary nursing skills depending on the patient’s needs. This is similar to what Comia et al. (2023) cited, that triage enables the Emergency Department staff to prioritize patient care so that patients requiring more immediate care are seen first. The lowest item is number 9 “select interventions consistent with client identified concerns and priorities such as establishing rapport to gain trust of the client” with a weighted mean of 4.95 or “Very Extensive” It showed that the nurses by all means try to gain the cooperation of the patient so that there will be participation in the care. Nursing Carousel and Nursing Allied Health (2024) cited that triage nurses must rapidly assess situations and determine the priority level for each patient. Remaining calm under pressure and managing one's own emotions are crucial skills.

Table 6. *Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along Safe and Quality Care (n=50)*

Indicators	WM	DR	TR
1. Identify actual or potential safety risks to clients.	4.96	A	VE

2. Reduce the risk of disease transmission by doing frequent hand washing.	4.96	A	VE
3. Modify interventions to suit the client's situation by selecting interventions that are consistent with the client's identified concerns and priorities.	4.99	A	VE
4. Implement strategies to prevent communicable diseases such as using proper ppses	4.96	A	VE
5. Select interventions consistent with client-identified concerns and priorities, such as establishing rapport to gain the client's trust.	4.98	A	VE
6. Promote health practices such as daily exercise for a healthy body.	4.96	A	VE
7. Implement preventative strategies related to safe use of medication, such as asking for written information about the side effects of the client's medication from the pharmacist.	4.98	A	VE
8. Collaborate with the client to prioritize needs and develop risk prevention strategies.	4.96	A	VE
9. Properly segregate waste materials in the designated trash bins.	4.95	A	VE
10. Adapt assessment to the client's situation, like assessing if the client has an AV fistula on her right or left forearm.	4.98	A	VE
Average Weighted Mean	4.97	A	VE

Legend: 4.50–5.00: Always (A) – Very Extensive (VE); 3.50–4.49: Often (O) – Extensive (E); 2.50–3.49: Sometimes (S) – Moderately Extensive (ME); 1.50–2.49: Seldom (SI) – Slightly Extensive (SE); 1.00–1.49: Never (N) – Not Extensive (NE).

Overall, on the extent of professional competence on triage among ER nurses, along with safe and quality care, got an average weighted mean of 4.97 or “Very Extensive.” It showed that the nurses render the safest nursing care to all patients under their watch. Aghabaray et al. (2023) mentioned that the effectiveness of triage systems lies in the professional knowledge and clinical skills of the ER staff. The nurses are the main triage operators in ERs and play an important role in prioritizing the needs of the patients who are in critical condition.

Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along with Health Education

Table 7 presents the extent of professional competency among triage nurses in health education. It revealed that all the respondents rated all indicators as “Very Extensive”; however, the highest is item 6, “help clients engage in healthy lifestyles through education, mentorship, and leadership,” with a weighted mean of 5.00, or “Very Extensive.” It revealed that the nurses give health education to their patients and even watch for them to know what to do with their patients when they are discharged.

According to the World Health Organization (2020), health education is an important strategy for health promotion that is essential for improving people's health and encouraging health investments. However, this has not received the necessary attention. The lack of interest stems from various causes, including a lack of awareness among health professionals and the difficulties that health educators face in translating efficiency into good results for their practice. Effective health education in the ER poses many challenges for nurse

Table 7. Extent of Professional Competence among Triage Nurses along with Health Education (n=50)

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>WM</i>	<i>DR</i>	<i>TR</i>
1. Help the client/relative to understand preventable health problems	4.97	A	VE
2. Assist the client to understand the link between health promotion strategies and health outcomes.	4.99	A	VE
3. Use evidence-based knowledge from nursing, health sciences, and related disciplines in the provision of individualized nursing care.	4.99	A	VE
4. Help the client understand interventions and their relationship to expected outcomes.	4.99	A	VE
5. Advise patients on disease prevention techniques rather than its cure	4.98	A	VE
6. Help clients engage in healthy lifestyles through education, mentorship, and leadership	5.00	A	VE
7. Use principles of teaching and learning with the client receiving curative/ supportive care.	4.99	A	VE
8. Encourage family and significant others to support the client during the rehabilitation process.	4.99	A	VE
9. Respond appropriately to the status of the client in relation to anticipated outcomes.	4.99	A	VE
10. Collaborate with clients to reduce complex health risks like developing disease complications.	4.99	A	VE
Average Weighted Mean	4.99	A	VE

Legend: 4.50–5.00: Always (A) – Very Extensive (VE); 3.50–4.49: Often (O) – Extensive (E); 2.50–3.49: Sometimes (S) – Moderately Extensive (ME); 1.50–2.49: Seldom (SI) – Slightly Extensive (SE); 1.00–1.49: Never (N) – Not Extensive (NE).

The lowest item is number 1, “help the client/relative to understand preventable health problems,” with a weighted mean of 4.97 or “Very Extensive.” It showed that the nurses help the client or significant others understand the condition of their patient. According to the Nursing Carousel and Nursing Allied Health (2024), throughout the triage process, nurses explain what is happening and keep patients informed. Effective communication helps calm anxious patients and families in stressful situations. Excellent communication is vital for triage nurses. They must gather information from patients quickly and efficiently, listening carefully to understand the chief complaint.

Overall, on the extent of professional competence on triage among ER nurses, along with health education, got an average weighted mean of 4.99 or “Very Extensive.” It showed that the nurses knew very well that health education is part of the nursing responsibility. According to Vorvick (2023), patient education allows patients to play a bigger role in their own care. It also aligns with patient- and family-centered care. To be effective, patient education needs to be more than instructions and information. Nurses need to be able to assess patient needs and communicate clearly.



Summary on the Extent of Clinical Competencies on Triage among Emergency Room Nurses

Table 8 presents a summary of the extent of professional competency among emergency room nurses. It revealed that all the respondents rated all indicators as “Very Extensive”; however, the highest is along health education and safe quality care, with a weighted mean of 4.99 and 4.97, or “Very Extensive.” It revealed that the nurses have the competencies in health education and safe quality care. As cited by Aghabarary et al. (2023), triage is the process of prioritizing patients for healthcare services for safe, quality care based on the severity of the disease or injury to perform the best treatment intervention for most people in the shortest possible time

Table 8. Level of Clinical Competencies among Emergency Room Nurses (n=50)

Aspects	WM	DR	TR
Legal responsibility	4.79	A	VE
Clinical competence on triage	4.85	A	VE
Health assessment skills	4.87	A	VE
Collaboration and teamwork	4.95	A	VE
Safe and quality care	4.97	A	VE
Health education	4.99	A	VE
Overall Weighted Mean	4.90	A	VE

Legend: 4.50–5.00: Always (A) – Very Extensive (VE); 3.50–4.49: Often (O) – Extensive (E); 2.50–3.49: Sometimes (S) – Moderately Extensive (ME); 1.50–2.49: Seldom (SI) – Slightly Extensive (SE); 1.00–1.49: Never (N) – Not Extensive (NE).

The lowest aspect is along legal responsibility, clinical competence on triage, and health assessment skills, with a weighted mean of 4.79, 4.85, and 4.87, or “Very Extensive.” It showed that the nurses, even the lowest in rating, still practiced extensively the skills required in the triage. According to Fukada (2018), Core competencies for nurses include the ability to practice safely and effectively, communicate well, and work collaboratively. They also include the ability to promote health and educate patients.

It is important for nurses to improve their nursing competency and utilize it in their daily practice. Competence is an ability acquired through experience and learning.

Overall, the extent of professional competence among ER nurses got an average weighted mean of 4.90 or “Very Extensive.” It showed that the nurses were competent in the performance of their functions in the emergency department. A competent triage nurse possesses the ability to rapidly assess patients, make quick, accurate clinical decisions based on focused assessments, prioritize care, effectively communicate with patients and healthcare team members, and manage multiple patients simultaneously, all while maintaining a calm and reassuring demeanor in a high-pressure environment (Wolf, et al., 2025).

Table 9. ANOVA Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across Age

Aspect	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-value	Sig	Remarks
Legal Responsibility	Between Groups	.090	3	.030	.295	.829	Not Significant
	Within Groups	4.678	46	.102			
	Total	4.768	49				
Clinical Competence	Between Groups	.107	3	.036	.351	.789	Not Significant
	Within Groups	4.697	46	.102			
	Total	4.805	49				
Patient Health Assessment Skills	Between Groups	.107	3	.036	.297	.828	Not Significant
	Within Groups	5.514	46	.120			
	Total	5.621	49				
Collaboration and Teamwork	Between Groups	.061	3	.020	.240	.868	Not Significant
	Within Groups	3.884	46	.084			
	Total	3.945	49				
Safe and Quality Care	Between Groups	.037	3	.012	.376	.771	Not Significant
	Within Groups	1.512	46	.033			
	Total	1.549	49				
Health Education	Between Groups	.002	3	.001	.290	.833	Not Significant
	Within Groups	.103	46	.002			
	Total	.105	49				
Overall Extent of Professional Competencies	Between Groups	.017	3	.006	.132	.941	Not Significant
	Within Groups	1.934	46	.042			
	Total	1.951	49				

The data presented in Table 9 demonstrate that there is no significant difference in the professional competencies of triage nurses based on age. Triage nurses exhibit similar levels of professional competencies, regardless of their age. A study conducted in Indonesia, as cited by Kerie et al. (2018), found that most participants rated their overall triage skills as moderate and held similar perceptions about each sub-dimension of triage skills.

t-Test Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across Sex

Table 10 presents the difference in the extent of professional competencies among triage nurses across sex.

Table 10. *t-Test Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across Sex*

Aspect	Sex	n	Mean	Mean Difference	Standard Error Difference	Df	t-value	Sig	Remarks
Legal responsibility	Male	25	4.74	-.116	.088	48	-1.325	.192	Not Significant
	Female	25	4.85						
Clinical competence on triage	Male	25	4.87	.032	.089	48	.358	.722	Not Significant
	Female	25	4.84						
Patient health assessment skills	Male	25	4.94	.128	.095	48	1.347	.184	Not Significant
	Female	25	4.81						
Collaboration and teamwork	Male	25	4.99	.084	.080	48	1.048	.300	Not Significant
	Female	25	4.91						
Safe and quality care	Male	25	4.98	.032	.051	48	.632	.530	Not Significant
	Female	25	4.95						
Health education	Male	25	4.98	-.012	.013	48	-.915	.365	Not Significant
	Female	25	5.00						
Overall Extent of Professional Competence	Male	25	4.92	.025	.057	48	.443	.660	Not Significant
	Female	25	4.89						

The computed t-values provided significance values which are higher than the set .05 level of significance. This suggests acceptance of the null hypothesis. Hence, there exists no significant difference in the extent of professional competencies of the nurses when grouped according to sex. It implied that both genders showed no difference in their performance of their skills in the emergency room.

t-Test Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across Civil Status

Table 11 displays the difference in the extent of professional competencies among triage nurses across civil status.

Table 11. *t-Test Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across Civil Status*

Aspect	Civil Status	n	Mean	Mean Difference	Standard Error Difference	Df	t-value	Sig	Remarks
Legal responsibility	Single	18	4.75	-.069	.092	48	-.745	.460	Not Significant
	Married	32	4.82						
Clinical competence on triage	Single	18	4.81	-.073	.093	48	-.783	.437	Not Significant
	Married	32	4.88						
Patient health assessment skills	Single	18	4.92	.078	.100	48	.783	.437	Not Significant
	Married	32	4.84						
Collaboration and teamwork	Single	18	4.97	.035	.084	48	.412	.682	Not Significant
	Married	32	4.94						
Safe and quality care	Single	18	4.98	.015	.053	48	.289	.774	Not Significant
	Married	32	4.96						
Health education	Single	18	4.98	-.019	.014	48	-1.414	.164	Not Significant
	Married	32	5.00						
Overall Extent of Professional Competence	Single	18	4.90	-.005	.059	48	-.077	.939	Not Significant
	Married	32	4.91						

Computed values reveal insignificant results. Single and married nurses have the same extent of professional competencies, including legal responsibility, clinical competence, patient health assessment skills, collaboration and teamwork, safe and quality care, and health education. It is only the man that emergency room nurses have different functions to perform in the ER.

According to Fukada (2018), Core competencies for nurses include the ability to practice safely and effectively, communicate well, and work collaboratively. They also include the ability to promote health and educate patients. It is important for nurses to improve their nursing competency and utilize it in their daily practice.

ANOVA Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across Highest Educational Attainment

Shown in Table 12 is the statistical data on the difference in the extent of professional competencies across the highest educational attainment of the triage nurses. All computed F-values generated significance values which are higher than the set .05 level of significance. The triage nurses have the same extent of professional competencies regardless of their highest educational attainment.

Findings in the study of Kerie et al. (2018) found that knowledge about triage, educational level, and training experience had a significant relationship with triage skill, respectively. This study revealed that most triage nurses had a moderate level of skills.

Table 12. ANOVA Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across Highest Educational Attainment

Aspect	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-value	Sig	Remarks
Legal Responsibility	Between Groups	.195	2	.097	1.001	.375	Not
	Within Groups	4.573	47	.097			Significant
	Total	4.768	49				
Clinical Competence	Between Groups	.013	2	.006	.063	.939	Not
	Within Groups	4.792	47	.102			Significant
	Total	4.805	49				
Patient Health Assessment Skills	Between Groups	.393	2	.197	1.768	.182	Not
	Within Groups	5.228	47	.111			Significant
	Total	5.621	49				
Collaboration and Teamwork	Between Groups	.320	2	.160	2.077	.137	Not
	Within Groups	3.625	47	.077			Significant
	Total	3.945	49				
Safe and Quality Care	Between Groups	.097	2	.049	1.572	.218	Not
	Within Groups	1.452	47	.031			Significant
	Total	1.549	49				
Health Education	Between Groups	.002	2	.001	.400	.673	Not
	Within Groups	.103	47	.002			Significant
	Total	.105	49				
Overall Extent of Professional Competencies	Between Groups	.080	2	.040	1.008	.373	Not
	Within Groups	1.871	47	.040			Significant
	Total	1.951	49				

ANOVA Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across Positions

Table 13 reveals the difference in the extent of professional competencies across the positions of the triage nurse.

The computed F-values and significance values indicate that there is no significant difference. Staff nurses, nurse supervisors, and head nurses have the same extent of professional competencies. It goes to show that nurses in the emergency room share the same expertise in emergency care.

Table 13. ANOVA Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across Position

Aspect	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-value	Sig	Remarks
Legal Responsibility	Between Groups	.096	2	.048	.482	.621	Not
	Within Groups	4.672	47	.099			Significant
	Total	4.768	49				
Clinical Competence	Between Groups	.122	2	.061	.611	.547	Not
	Within Groups	4.683	47	.100			Significant
	Total	4.805	49				
Patient Health Assessment Skills	Between Groups	.091	2	.046	.387	.681	Not
	Within Groups	5.530	47	.118			Significant
	Total	5.621	49				
Collaboration and Teamwork	Between Groups	.014	2	.007	.083	.920	Not
	Within Groups	3.931	47	.084			Significant
	Total	3.945	49				
Safe and Quality Care	Between Groups	.006	2	.003	.087	.917	Not
	Within Groups	1.543	47	.033			Significant
	Total	1.549	49				
Health Education	Between Groups	.001	2	.000	.125	.883	Not
	Within Groups	.104	47	.002			Significant
	Total	.105	49				
Overall Extent of Professional Competencies	Between Groups	.036	2	.018	.440	.647	Not
	Within Groups	1.915	47	.041			Significant
	Total	1.951	49				

As specified in the scope of nursing practice of RA 9173, as a member of the health team, nurses shall collaborate with other health care providers for the curative, preventive, and rehabilitative aspects of care, restoration of health, and alleviation of suffering.

Table 14 presents the difference in the extent of professional competencies among triage nurses across the number of years assigned in the ER.



As shown in the computed F-values, no significant difference exists along clinical competence, collaboration and teamwork, Safe and quality care, and health education. It revealed that nurses did not vary in their competencies with their co-nurses. Nurses are considered experts due to rigorous training in the care of emergency situations.

Table 14. ANOVA Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across the Number of Years Assigned in the ER

Aspect	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-value	Sig	Remarks
Legal Responsibility	Between Groups	.746	2	.373	4.357	.018	Significant
	Within Groups	4.022	47	.086			
	Total	4.768	49				
Clinical Competence	Between Groups	.474	2	.237	2.570	.087	Not Significant
	Within Groups	4.331	47	.092			
	Total	4.805	49				
Patient Health Assessment Skills	Between Groups	.737	2	.369	3.548	.037	Significant
	Within Groups	4.883	47	.104			
	Total	5.621	49				
Collaboration and Teamwork	Between Groups	.281	2	.141	1.804	.176	Not Significant
	Within Groups	3.664	47	.078			
	Total	3.945	49				
Safe and Quality Care	Between Groups	.098	2	.049	1.587	.215	Not Significant
	Within Groups	1.451	47	.031			
	Total	1.549	49				
Health Education	Between Groups	.003	2	.002	.706	.499	Not Significant
	Within Groups	.102	47	.002			
	Total	.105	49				
Overall Extent of Professional Competencies	Between Groups	.280	2	.140	3.946	.026	Significant
	Within Groups	1.671	47	.036			
	Total	1.951	49				

Meanwhile, a significant difference exists along legal responsibility and patient health assessment skills, making the overall extent of professional competence of the triage nurses significantly different across the number of years assigned in the ER. The results of the Scheffe test are shown in the following table. The Segura et al. (2017) study revealed that competency scores were significantly higher in nurses with training in critical patient care and triage and those with longer emergency department experience.

Table 15 displays the results of the Scheffe Test on the significant difference in the extent of professional competencies among triage nurses along legal responsibility and patient health assessment skills across the number of years assigned in the ER.

Table 15. Scheffe Test Results on the Significant Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across the Number of Years assigned in the ER

Aspect	Compared Groups	Mean Difference	Sig
Legal Responsibility	1-2 vs 3-4	.302	.024
Patient Health Assessment Skills	1-2 vs 3-4	.309	.039
Overall Extent of Professional Competency	1-2 vs 3-4	.185	.034

A positive mean difference exists between 1-2 and 3-4 years assigned in the ER. This means that the triage nurses who have spent 1-2 years in the ER have a higher extent of professional competencies, legal responsibility, and health assessment skills compared to the nurses with 3-4 years in the ER. This implies that new nurses in the service have more consciousness and eagerness to deal with emergency cases because their experiences are still enriching.

ANOVA Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across the Number of Relevant Training on Triage

Table 16 presents the difference in the extent of professional competencies among triage nurses across relevant training on triage. There are no significant differences in legal responsibility, clinical competence, patient health assessment skills, and health education among emergency room nurses. This indicates that their competencies are comparable. However, there are significant differences in collaboration and teamwork and in the delivery of safe and quality care. The results of the Scheffe test are shown in the following table.

Table 16. ANOVA Results on the Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across the Number of Relevant Training on Triage

Aspect	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F-value	Sig	Remarks
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Legal Responsibility	Between Groups	.254	2	.127	1.320	.277	Not Significant
	Within Groups	4.515	47	.096			
	Total	4.768	49				
Clinical Competence	Between Groups	.385	2	.193	2.050	.140	Not Significant
	Within Groups	4.419	47	.094			
	Total	4.805	49				
Patient Health Assessment Skills	Between Groups	.303	2	.151	1.337	.273	Not Significant
	Within Groups	5.318	47	.113			
	Total	5.621	49				
Collaboration and Teamwork	Between Groups	.551	2	.275	3.815	.029	Significant
	Within Groups	3.394	47	.072			
	Total	3.945	49				
Safe and Quality Care	Between Groups	.198	2	.099	3.438	.040	Significant
	Within Groups	1.351	47	.029			
	Total	1.549	49				
Health Education	Between Groups	.004	2	.002	.997	.377	Not Significant
	Within Groups	.101	47	.002			
	Total	.105	49				
Overall Extent of Professional Competencies	Between Groups	.171	2	.085	2.254	.116	Not Significant
	Within Groups	1.780	47	.038			
	Total	1.951	49				

There is no significant difference in legal responsibility, clinical competence, patient health assessment skills, and health education among emergency room nurses. This suggests that their competencies are comparable. However, there is a significant difference between collaboration and teamwork and providing safe and quality care. The results of the Scheffe test are presented in the following table.

Table 17. Scheffe Test Results on the Significant Difference in the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses across the Number of Relevant Training on Triage

Aspect	Compared Groups	Mean Difference	Sig
Collaboration and Teamwork	3-4 vs 5 & more	-.329	.03
Safe and quality care	3-4 vs 5 & more	-.200	.04
			2

Table 17 displays the results of the Scheffe Test on the significant difference in collaboration and teamwork, as well as safe and quality care across the number of relevant trainings. The Segura et al. (2017) study revealed that competency scores were significantly higher in nurses with training in critical patient care and triage and those with longer emergency department experience.

The significant negative mean differences indicate that the triage nurses with five or more relevant trainings have a significantly higher extent of professional competencies in collaboration, teamwork, and safe and quality care compared to those with 3-4 relevant trainings. The study of Kerie et al. (2018) found that knowledge about triage, educational level, and training experience had a significant relationship with triage skill, respectively. This study revealed that most triage nurses had a moderate level of skills.

Table 18. Relationship Between the Extent of Professional Competencies among Triage Nurses and their Profile Variables

Profile Variable	A		B		C		D		E		F		Overall	
	r-value	sig												
Age	-.036	.805	.101	.484	-.027	.854	.015	.920	-.005	.973	-.065	.652	.009	.951
Sex	.188	.192	-.052	.722	-.191	.184	-.150	.300	-.091	.530	.131	.365	-.064	.660
Civil Status Highest	.107	.460	.112	.437	-.112	.437	-.059	.682	-.042	.774	.200	.164	.011	.939
Educational Attainment	-.190	.186	-.026	.859	-.098	.500	-.159	.269	-.135	.352	.120	.406	-.137	.344
Position	.083	.566	.151	.294	.121	.402	.056	.697	.058	.691	.069	.633	.121	.402
Number of Years Assigned in the ER	-.094	.515	-.038	.794	-.131	.363	-.073	.614	-.044	.760	.157	.276	-.088	.542
Number of Relevant	-.214	.136	-.134	.355	-.037	.798	.054	.710	.081	.578	.179	.212	-.069	.636

Trainings on Triage

*Significant at .05 level

Legend; A – Legal Responsibility; B – Clinical Competence in Triage; C – Patient Health Assessment Skills; D – Collaboration and Teamwork; E – Safe and Quality Care; F – Health Education.

All the Pearson r coefficients of correlations in every area of professional competencies of triage emergency room nurses are not significantly related to the profile variable of the respondents. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, stating that “There are no significant relationships between the extent of professional competencies of the emergency room nurses in triage and their profile variables”. This means that the extent of professional competencies of the respondent nurses is not in any way associated with their profile variable.

Table 18 shows the relationship between the extent of professional competencies among triage nurses and their profile variables.

The computed r -values generated significance values higher than the set .05 significance level. This is true in all areas of professional competence considered and all profile variables. Therefore, no significant relationship exists between the triage nurse's professional competence and their profile variables. It revealed that the emergency room nurses had the competencies required of the profession, particularly in emergency care nursing. As specified in RA 9173, nurses singly or collaborate with others to initiate and perform nursing services to individuals, families, and communities in any health care setting.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following are hereby concluded.

The nurse respondents are very qualified in their position as emergency room nurses in charge of triage.

The respondent nurses have a very extensive clinical competency in triage, including health education, safe and quality care, and collaboration and teamwork, and are lowest in legal responsibility, clinical competency in triage, and health assessment skills.

The variables used in the study did not differentiate the extent of professional competencies of the respondent nurses.

There are no associations between the extent of competencies of the respondent nurses in triage and their profile variables.

A proposed program is prepared to enhance the clinical competencies in triage among emergency room nurses.

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following are hereby recommended to enhance the clinical competencies on triage among emergency room nurses.

The respondents must pursue a higher level of learning to upgrade their level of competencies and qualifications as a requirement in their positions.

They can continue attending to other related seminars or trainings on clinical competencies in triage to be competitive with the other nurses, gain more knowledge and skills in the emergency room, and be promoted to higher positions other than staff nurses.

They must enhance themselves on the other core competency standards in nursing for better patient care outcomes.

The proposed program can be adopted and implemented in government hospitals to enhance their ER nurses. Future studies can be conducted using more variables not covered in the study and a wider venue, under the auspices of an accredited graduate school in this area of the province.

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