



# **Continuous Professional Development on Job Performance of Registered Nurses in Ghana**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Continuous Professional Development offers nurses the opportunity to improve their knowledge, skills and also improve their performance in the healthcare setting. The purpose of the study was to examine if there is a relationship between continuous Professional Development and Job Performance and also finds if there is a significant difference of job performance when sex, age, and clinical experience. Correlational research design was utilized where 164 registered nurses were conveniently sampled from Ghana. The study utilized self-constructed survey questionnaire was for continuous professional development and Six Dimension Scale of Nursing Performance (SDNS) developed by Schwirian, (1978) was adopted and modified to measure the job performances of nurses. The statistical treatments used were Pearson Correlation, T-Test, and ANOVA to address the research questions. The study showed that there was a moderate positive significant relationship between continuing professional development and job. There was no significant difference in job performance when age, sex, and clinical experience were considered. Healthcare administrators should encourage and advocate for the participation of nurses in continuous learning to improve nurses their knowledge and skills on nurses. Institution policies should be properly aligned to help nurses in the participation of professional roles. Further research should explore other variables in relations to continuous professional development to improve the job performance of nurses.

**Keywords:** Continuous Professional Development, Job Performance, Registered Nurses.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nursing is a key component of the quality of healthcare services. Nurses are the frontier of the delivery of health care as they work with patients every day. Human resources are the system of health care most important resource components, according to the World Health Organization report, the system of health care performance depends on the competencies, knowledge, and motivation of the people responsible for healthcare delivery. Training and

educating health professionals, including nurses, are essential components of performance enhancement (WHO, 2016).

According to the World Health Organisation nursing professionals needs to be competent in their practice thus having a scientific basis for their practice also have adequate knowledge to communicate with increasingly informed patients and parents moreover nurses must have the ability to access relevant information and have adequate technology in their area of specialization (WHO, 2016).

The performance of nurses has been a global phenomenon. In a descriptive study by Awases, Bezuidenhout, and Roos (2013) explored the factors that affect the performances of nurses. The researcher revealed that there is a lack of recognition of well-performing employees, the lack of a formal performance assessment system and poor working conditions and not participating in professional development programs.

According to Al-Makhaita, Sabra, and Hafez (2014), nursing work performance represents the value of treatment provided and subsequently patient results and patient satisfaction, but as a consequence of occupational stress and reduced satisfaction, nurses' ineffective work performance is deemed a risk factor for patient safety (Wang & Tsai 2014).

Several types of research have examined the factors influencing the participation of nurses in ongoing professional development. Exploratory cross-sectional research in the Netherlands, Brekelmans, Maassen, Poell, Weststrate, and Geurdes (2016) examined the variables influencing nurses to engage in ongoing skilled activities. 5,500 nurses were chosen using a convenience sampling method. The research disclosed that circumstances were discovered to be mildly motive-related, which was highly important in itself. The study found that how they regard particular CPD actions is the important variable affecting patients' involvement in CPD. The CPD's reasons and their understanding that the correct circumstances for involvement are in location.

Price and Reichert (2017) investigate the significance of continued professional development of nurses in Canada in a qualitative descriptive method. A focus unit consisting of 185 respondents was used. To investigate the continuous professional development of nurses, thematic data analysis was used. The research indicates that education and training, the excellent working climate of Nurses encourages nurses to engage in continuous professional development in order to improve their clinical expertise and abilities.

A general hospital study by Ni et al, (2014) to examine the continuous professional development among nurses in China. A cross-sectional study where 2727 nurses were sampled

for the study from ten hospitals in China. The outcome of the research showed that nurses attend continuous education to improve their knowledge on the current nursing practice, to maintain professional status, improve their clinical skills and have an academic degree. Time constraints, lack of opportunity, job commitment and financial burdens hinder nurses from attending continuous education programs. The study concluded that effective nursing administration has to seek the need to involve nurses in continuous professional development (Ni et al., 2014)

In a descriptive study by Onyango (2013) explored the perception of nurses in the public health care facility in Kenya consenting continuous professional development. The researcher selected 173 nurses. The study revealed that nurses' views continuous professional development as important, however, the nurse's involvement of nurse was minimal. Personal, professional, and organizational factors were some of the barriers that affect a nurse's participation in CPD. The study recommends that the preparation of nurses and the use of teaching strategies that recognize experience and adults as resources have been identified to increase the participation of nurses in the continuous professional development program.

A study conducted in Ghana by Badu-Nyarko (2015) examines the factors of nurses' continuous professional development. The study revealed that to improve the skills of nurses and to maintain their professional standards, many nurses participate. Few were interested in administering and researching nursing. Individuals themselves provide financial support for participation. The study concluded that continuing professional education for nurses is determined by the circumstances in which they find themselves and continues to be interested in new medical and nursing developments.

There is a paucity of literature that examines the influence of continuous professional development on the job performances of registered nurses in Ghana. The aim of this study is to examine the influence of continuous professional development on the job performance of nurses in Ghana.

Specially it will answer the following question:

1. Is there a significant relationship between continuous professional development and job performances?
2. Is there a significant difference in the job performances of the nurses when considering?
  - 1) Sex
  - 2) .Age
  - 3) Clinical experience

## Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for the research was;

1. There is no significant relationship between continuous professional development and job performances?
2. There is no significant difference in job performances when considering?
  - 1) Sex
  - 2) Age
  - 3) Clinical experience

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Continuing professional education has been a major debate over the years (Badu-Nyarko, 2015). According to Madden and Mitchell (1993) defined continuous professional development as maintaining and improving professional knowledge, expertise, and skills throughout their careers in accordance with a plan formulated for the needs of the professional, the employer, the profession and society. Brekelmans, Poell, & van Wijk (2013) postulate that CPD is a term used to encompass the variety of learning activities that follow graduation, building on individuals as adults and qualified practitioners' experiences, knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The American Nurses Association defined CPD as the continuous cycle of effective involvement of staff in learning activities that help to develop and maintain their ongoing skills, enhance their skills training and promote their career objectives (ANA, 2011). The working definition for the continuous professional development in this study is a learning activity of registered nurses consisting of planned learning experiences aimed at increasing knowledge, attitudes and skills to improve nursing practice, customer care, research, administration, and education.

Glasper (2018) view the essence of CPD to encourages nurses to maintain and develop skills they need to deliver high-quality, safe and effective care across all roles and settings and to assist them in maintaining their professional development to facilitate improved care. CPD for nurses across the country is configured in three domains: Statutory training: required for employees and employers to be compliant with specific legislation pertaining to health and social care. Examples include health and safety policy, fire safety, and manual handling. Mandatory training: deemed essential by the employer related to the character of the role, for example, hand hygiene and incident reporting. Developmental training: this can be either

formal or informal, and maybe for the individual's personal development in relation to their role or to support workforce development and transformation (Glasper 2018).

According to Viljoen, Coetzee, & Heyns, 2017; Ross, Barr, & Stevens, 2013; Katsikitis et al., 2013, the reasons given by nurses for participating in CPD activities are as follows: developing new professional knowledge and skills; keeping abreast of new developments in nursing practice and health; personal development; career development; escape or stimulation; and acquisition of credentials. The obstacles preventing nurses from participating in ongoing professional development have been recognized in the literature as difficulties in acquiring study leave; shortage of nurses; family and household duties; residing in rural fields; absence of economic assistance; absence of early notice; and program not appropriate to practice. (Coventry, Maslin- Prothero, & Smith, 2015; Mizuno-Lewis, et al., 2014; Pool, Poell, & ten Cate, 2013).

In the healthcare industry, job performance is essential because it is one of the key productivity and profitability indicators (Ong & Noor-Hayati, 2016). Al Maqbali (2015) described work performance as an individual's efficiency in performing the tasks and duties of immediate health treatment. Montano, Reeske, Franke, & Hüffmeier (2017) posited performance into technical core practices (job output) and habits that retain the social atmosphere in which the technical particle (contextual performance) should operate (Kwon, Yang, & Eom, 2015; Olsen, Bjaalid, & Mikkelsen, 2017).

According to Owaka (2014), a variety of factors affect organizational growth and development, of which professional development plays a significant role. Professional development plays an essential role in getting organizations in better positions to compete and improve consumer service delivery. Evidence of the effects of training and development on employee performance is presented in the existing literature. In particular, some studies examined performance with regard to employee performance (Hee, Kamaludin, & Ping 2016).

Professional development can have a positive impact on the work performance of nurses, according to Nejati, Rodiek, & Shepley (2016) however, they argue that it should understand the needs of nurses and the changing circumstances in the nursing profession in order to have any positive impact on the job performance of nurses. Professional development may have a positive impact on the work performance of nurses, but only in accordance with other factors, it has a profound positive influence (Nejati, Rodiek, & Shepley 2016)

Lu, Zhao, & While (2019) suggest that employee skills change through effective professional development and thus not only enhance employees' performance in order to perform their

current jobs effectively. However, also enhance their skills, attitude, and knowledge to future job demands, thereby contributing to sustainable organizational performance, on the other hand, Olsen, Bjaalid, & Mikkelsen (2017) argue that professional development is not sufficient and that employees need to adapt constantly to new job performance requirements.

Hariyati and Safril (2018) in their current study, examined the association between continuous professional development and job performance of nurses in Indonesian. The researchers sampled 149 nurses to answer the questionnaires. The results of the research showed that there is a moderate positive correlation between continuous professional development and job performance of nurses ( $r=0.42$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ). The study concluded that there should be an improvement in continuous professional development programs for nurses to enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitude. The theoretical framework for this study was based on a behavioral theory of learning developed by Waston.

According to Bakhshi and Kalantari (2017), there is a significant relationship of sex when considering job performance, however, there was no significant difference in gender when job performance was considered (Tagoe & Quarshie, 2016). There was a significant relation on age on job performance (Gaki, Kontodimopoulos, & Niakas, 2012). AlMakhaita, Sabra, and Hafez (2014) posit in their study, there is a significant difference in the clinical experience of registered nurses in relation to job performance.

## **METHODS**

The study used a correlational research design to examine continuous professional development and job performance of nurses. The researchers used a convenient sampling technique to sample 164 registered nurses from two teaching hospital in Ghana. The inclusion criteria are registered nurses who are willing to take part in the study and registered nurses who have worked for one year and above. The exclusion criteria are registered nurses who have worked for less than six months will not take part in the study as well as community health nurses and midwives.

Out of the 164 nurses, 54 (32.9%) were female, 110 (67.1%) were males. The ages of the respondent were 18-29 years were 68 (41.5%), 30-44 years were 96 (67.1%). The clinical experiences of the respondents showed that from 1-4 years was 60 (36.6), from 5-9 years was 96 (58.6%) and ten years as above was 8 (4.9%).

Thirteen self-constructed items were used to examine the continuous professional development, and Six Dimension Scale of Nursing Performance (SDNS) developed by

Schwirian, (1978) was adopted and modified to measure the job performances of nurses. The self-constructed questionnaires were externally validated by a Ph.D. who is an expert in nursing research. The reliability measurement based on the internal consistency by using Cronbach Alpha resulted that continuous professional development was .805 and job performance was .896

In determining the strength of the relationship Cohen (1998) absolute correlation values where  $r=.10$  to  $.29$  meaning small or low,  $r=.30$  to  $.49$  is medium or moderate and larger  $r=.50$  to  $1.0$  is large or high and interpreted were used.

A research assistant was employed from Ghana. Registered nurses were approached from the two separate institutions. The research assistant explained the purpose and procedure of the study before distributing the questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected and sealed after completion. The research assistant encoded the raw data and sent them using google forum for statistical treatment to be done.

Nurses privacy was protected by providing anonymous and voluntary participation. The purpose of the study was explained, and consent would be obtained before data collection. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Furthermore, the identification of the participants was not disclosed, and only aggregate data were presented. Ethical consideration was taken into account during the study from the various two teaching hospitals.

The study used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 to analyze the data. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were used to determine the relationship based on their strength and direction of continuous professional development and job performance was used to answer the question one of the research question T-Test and ANOVA were used to assess the differences between registered nurses' demographics, job performance which answers question two.

## **RESULTS**

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the first research question to determine the relationship between continuous professional development and job performance. The relationship between continuous professional development and job performance showed a moderately significant positive relationship ( $r=.341$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) at a 95% confidence interval. This means that as the job performance of the registered nurse's increases the continuous professional development also increases.

**Table 1. Relationship Between Continuous Professional Development and Job Performance**

<b>Correlations</b>			
		Continuous Professional Development	Job Performance
Continuous Professional Development	Pearson Correlation	1	.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	164	164

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This implies that the nurses’ after participating in continuous professional education, they practice what they have learned to increase their performance at the healthcare facilities and also improve the care of their patients; as a result, the study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between continuous development and job performance. This study is been affirmed by Hariyati and Safril (2018) which showed that there is a moderation relationship between continuous professional development and job performances among nurses in Indonesian.

**The difference in Job Performance when considering Sex**

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the job performance scores for female and male. There was no significant difference in scores for Males (M =3.2635, SD = .46547) and females (M = 3.2285, SD = .56882 ;  $t(88.90) = -.392, p = .696$ , two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference =, -.03494, 95% CI: .14236 to .21223 ) at equal not variance assumed. This study fails to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the job performances on registered nurses when considering their sex. The results of the study are in line with Tagoe & Quarshie (2016) which states that there was no significant difference in gender when job performance was considered; however, the finding of Bakhshi and Kalantari (2017) revealed that there is a significant relationship of sex when considering job performance.

**Table 2. T-Test on Job Performance When Considering Sex**

<b>Independent Samples Test</b>	
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Job Performance	Equal variances assumed	4.392	.038	-.419	162	.676	-.03494	.08335	-.19953	.12966
	Equal variances not assumed			-.392	88.901	.696	-.03494	.08923	-.21223	.14236

**The difference in Job Performance when considering Age**

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the job performance scores on the ages of the respondents 18-29 years and 30-44 years. There was no significant difference in scores for 18-29 years (M =3.2546, SD = .49870) and 30-44 years (M = 3.2501, SD = .50415.;  $t(145.382) = .056, p = .955$ , two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference =, .00445, 95% CI: -.15264 to .16155) at equal variance assumed. This study fails to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the job performances on registered nurses when considering their age. The results of the study contradict the findings Gaki, Kontodimopoulos, & Niakas (2012), which revealed that there was a significant relation on age on job performance.

**Table 3. T-Test on Job Performance when considering Age**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differen ce	Std. Error Differen ce	Lower	Upper
Job Performance	Equal variances assumed	.209	.648	.056	162	.955	.00445	.07955	-.15264	.16155
	Equal variances not assumed			.056	145.382	.955	.00445	.07940	-.15248	.16139

### The difference in Job Performance when considering Clinical Experience

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of job performance on the clinical experience of the registered nurses. Participants were divided into three groups according to their age Group 1: 1 to 4 years; Group 2: 5 to 9 years; Group 3: 10 years and above. There was no statistical difference in the clinical experience group with the  $F=.836$  and  $p>.436$  when the significant level was placed at  $p>0.05$ . The mean score of the age groups are Group 1 ( $M= 3.225$ ,  $SD= .556376$ ) Group 2 ( $M= 3.250$ ,  $SD= .43956$ ); Group 3 ( $M= 3.468$ ,  $SD=.68478$ ). The study fails to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in job performance when considering clinical experience. The results of the study contradict the finding of AlMakhaita, Sabra, and Hafez (2014) which posited that there is a significant difference in the clinical experience of registered nurses in relation to job performance.

Table 4. ANOVA of Job Performance when considering Clinical Experience

ANOVA					
Job Performance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.419	2	.210	.836	.436
Within Groups	40.390	161	.251		
Total	40.809	163			

## DISCUSSION

The study showed that there was a moderate positive relationship between continuous professional development and job performance of nurses. Healthcare administrators should encourage and advocate for the participation of nurses in continuous learning to improve nurses their knowledge and skills on nurses. Institution policies should be properly aligned to help nurses in the participation of professional roles. Further research should explore other variables in relations to continuous professional development to improve the job performance of nurses.

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