

Narrative Inquiry on Coping Strategies of a New Nurse in a Government Hospital in Negros, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This narrative inquiry explored the personal story of a newly hired nurse navigating the challenges of public healthcare. The study identified five key themes: inspiration, growth and development, learning and communication, clinical practice, and anxiety and coping strategies. Grounded in theories such as Social Cognitive Career Theory, Transformational Learning Theory, and the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, the findings revealed the impact of intrinsic motivation, mentorship, and continuous learning on the participant's professional journey. The participant highlighted the significance of familial influence, experiential learning, and effective communication in shaping resilience and adaptability, particularly in resource-limited settings. Anxiety management through prayer, self-care, and support networks emerged as critical for workplace well-being. The study's implications emphasize the need for mentorship programs, stress management workshops, and experiential learning opportunities in nursing education and practice. These findings offer valuable insights for improving new nurses' professional development, job satisfaction, and patient care outcomes.

Keywords: Nursing profession, coping strategies, narrative inquiry, Negros Occidental, Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

In the healthcare industry, nurses are frequently seen as the foundation of medical systems around the world. Nursing practitioners worldwide confront various challenges, especially in their first few years of work. Stress from high patient loads, long working hours, and emotional strain from patient care are universal concerns (Kaur & Haque, 2024). The necessity for resilience-building programs to enhance nurses' well-being and lessen burnout has been highlighted by the substantial increase in research on coping mechanisms (Baglioni et al., 2024; Moon et al., 2024; Masoloko et al., 2024). Nevertheless, these studies frequently concentrate on developed countries, which leaves gaps in our knowledge of the particular difficulties faced by nurses in environments with low resources.

In Asia, where healthcare systems differ greatly between nations, institutional, cultural, and economic considerations

have a significant impact on the nursing profession. Stress levels are raised by the fact that many nurses work in understaffed hospitals with little staffing and few resources (Abumalik et al., 2024; Kana, 2024). Coping mechanisms including mindfulness, family support, and peer support have been studied in nations like China (Jin et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024), India (Dhillon & Das, 2024; Kowshik et al., 2024), and South Korea (Moon et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2024). Southeast Asian countries, where nurses frequently encounter exacerbated challenges as a result of economic and social inequalities, have received less attention.

Nurses in the Philippines are vital to the healthcare system, yet their hardships are frequently overlooked. Among the many difficulties faced by recently hired nurses at government hospitals are excessive workloads, low pay, and little prospects for professional advancement (Alibudbud, 2024; Labrague, 2024; Parial et al., 2024). These elements, along with a lack of healthcare professionals, produce a

demanding work environment that may have an impact on employees' emotional and physical well-being. Local nurses are frequently left to handle these difficulties with little institutional support, despite the fact that Filipino nurses are well-known throughout the world for their skill and compassion.

Due to a mix of rural healthcare concerns and a lack of government funding, nurses in Negros, a province in the Visayas area of the Philippines, face even greater difficulties. In government hospitals, newly hired nurses frequently face an increasing patient population, understaffed facilities, and a shortage of necessary medical supplies. Seeing how resilient and adaptable nurses were under these circumstances inspired the researchers to carry out their investigation. Designing support systems that are suited to their individual needs requires an understanding of their coping strategies.

Studies on coping mechanisms and nurse resilience have been conducted (Adefuin & Elisan, 2023; Eduardo et al., 2024; RilleraMarzo et al., 2021), however, most of them concentrate on senior or highly experienced nurses. The experiences of recently hired nurses have not received much attention, especially in rural or resource-constrained places like Negros. By illuminating the coping mechanisms used by inexperienced nurses and pinpointing the variables affecting these mechanisms, this study seeks to close this gap. This study aims to provide light on the support systems that this vulnerable population requires by concentrating on a less-studied demographic.

Therefore, the purpose of this narrative inquiry is to determine the various coping mechanisms used by a recently hired nurse in a government hospital in Negros, Philippines, as well as to investigate the variables influencing these mechanisms. It is anticipated that the results of this study will have important ramifications for hospital administrators, legislators, and nursing educators as they develop initiatives and programs to improve nurses' stress levels and resilience. The ultimate goal of the study is to help enhance the local healthcare workforce's working conditions and general well-being.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses the narrative inquiry method in a qualitative research design. The goal of narrative inquiry is to use one's own stories to explore and comprehend one's lived experiences (Lewis, 2024). This method is appropriate for investigating the coping mechanisms of a newly hired nurse in a public hospital since it provides an extensive understanding of her viewpoints, feelings, and experiences (Pham, 2024). The study intends to create a compelling

narrative that demonstrates the difficulties and resiliency of the main informant using this design.

Participant

A single participant (Pham, 2024) who satisfied the following requirements was chosen for the study: (1) a recently hired nurse with less than two years of experience in a Negros Occidental hospital; (2) a nurse currently employed in a hospital; (3) has experienced and handled stressful situations at work; and (4) is open to sharing personal experiences and insights through interviews. The participant was chosen through purposeful sampling, which ensured that she fulfilled the study's goals.

Instrument

A semi-structured interview (Kutsyuruba & Stasel, 2023) guide that was created in accordance with the study's objectives served as the primary instrument for gathering data. Open-ended questions in the interview protocol were intended to extract in-depth descriptions of the participant's experiences, coping mechanisms, and factors affecting her resilience. Experts in nursing and qualitative research evaluated the protocol to make sure it was appropriate and relevant.

Data Collection Procedure

A systematic approach was used in the data collection process to guarantee thorough and trustworthy data collection. The procedure was broken down into three phases: interview preparation, interview execution, and post-interview activities. Before the interviews, the researchers reviewed relevant literature on coping strategies to design an effective semi-structured interview guide. The guide included open-ended questions that encouraged the participant to share her experiences in depth. Then, using purposive sampling, the researchers identified and invited a newly employed nurse in a government hospital in Negros who met the inclusion criteria. The researchers provided the participant with a detailed explanation of the study's purpose, scope, and process. Prior to the interview, the researchers obtained written informed consent from the participant, who was assured of her anonymity, the confidentiality of her responses, and her right to withdraw at any point without repercussions. Lastly, a private and comfortable setting was selected for the interview to create a safe space where the participant could share her experiences freely.

During the interviews, the researchers built rapport by conversing casually with the participant to build trust and make her feel at ease. Each session lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and was guided by the interview protocol. The researchers encouraged the participant to elaborate on her experiences, coping strategies, and the challenges

she faced. Active listening and probing questions were used to explore significant details. With the participant's consent, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy during transcription. Field notes were taken simultaneously to capture non-verbal cues, emotions, and contextual details, adding depth to the narrative. The researchers remained flexible, allowing the participant to lead the conversation while ensuring that all key questions were addressed. The participant was given breaks if needed to avoid fatigue or emotional distress.

After the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to ensure an accurate representation of the participant's narrative. The transcribed data and preliminary interpretations were shared with the participant for validation to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. All audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes were securely stored in password-protected files to maintain confidentiality. The researchers reflected on the interviews and noted initial insights or themes for further analysis, ensuring that the data collection process informed subsequent analytical steps.

Data Analysis

In accordance with Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework (Byrne, 2022), thematic analysis was used to examine the data gathered. This approach was selected due to its adaptability in identifying themes and patterns while maintaining the richness and depth of the participant's story. Because it enables the researchers to systematically understand complex data and connect findings to the objectives of the study, thematic analysis is especially well-suited for this qualitative research.

The first phase is familiarization with the data, in which the researchers read the transcribed interviews and listened to the audio recordings several times to become fully immersed in the experiences of the respondents. In this step, the researchers were able to identify first impressions and obtain a comprehensive grasp of the story. Detailed notes were made to capture emerging ideas and observations during this process.

In the second phase, which involved generating preliminary codes, the researchers systematically went over the data to find meaningful segments relevant to the study. Key themes, patterns, or recurrent thoughts pertaining to the participant's coping mechanisms and resilience-influencing variables were represented by these codes. Because the coding procedure was manual and iterative, no important data was overlooked.

Sorting the codes into possible themes that represented more general patterns in the data was the third step, known as "theme searching." The researchers ensured that the

themes encapsulated the main points of the participant's story. Reviewing themes in the fourth phase allowed the researchers to enhance and validate the themes that were found by ensuring that they aligned with both the coded data and the entire dataset. This stage verified that the themes were distinct, coherent, and relevant to the study's objectives.

During the fifth phase, defining and naming themes, the researchers developed clear definitions and labels for each theme. This step involved articulating how each theme related to the research question and its role in the narrative. Themes were defined in a way that highlighted their significance to the respondent's coping strategies.

Finally, in the sixth phase, producing the final report, the researchers synthesized the themes into a cohesive narrative that addressed the study's objectives. Rich descriptions and direct utterances from the participant were incorporated to illustrate the themes and provide context to the findings. The final report emphasized the interplay between challenges and resilience, offering insights into how the participant navigated stressful situations in their role as a newly employed nurse.

Data Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study employed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria (Hayre, 2021). Member checking (Coleman, 2022) was conducted by sharing the interpreted data with the respondent to validate its accuracy. Thick descriptions were used to provide detailed context, enhancing transferability. An audit trail documented the research process to establish dependability. Triangulation of data sources, including field notes and interviews, was used to enhance confirmability.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was secured from the participant, ensuring she understood the purpose, procedures, and potential risks of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by using pseudonyms and securing all data in password-protected files. The participant was informed of her right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Respect and sensitivity were upheld throughout the research process to prioritize the participant's well-being.

RESULTS

The analysis of the interview data yielded five major themes: inspiration, growth and development, learning and communication, clinical practice, and anxiety and coping strategies. These themes capture the participant's experiences, emotions, and strategies in navigating

the challenges of being a newly employed nurse in a government hospital in Negros Occidental, Philippines.

Theme 1: Inspiration

Inspiration emerged as a pivotal factor in shaping the participant's career path and sustaining her motivation to pursue nursing, even when faced with initial doubts. For the participant, the influence of her family played a crucial role in her decision-making process. Growing up in a family with a strong nursing background, she felt an inherent connection to the profession.

"Most of my aunts were nurses; that is why I decided to take up nursing, but at first, I wanted a course related to business. I really liked the idea of managing a business, maybe something like owning a coffee shop or a small boutique."

Despite her initial inclination toward business studies, the participant reconsidered her options after realizing the challenges associated with business-related courses, particularly those involving mathematics.

"Knowing that business-related courses have mathematics subjects, I just decided to take up nursing since I have family members who were also nurses. I thought it would be easier to have their guidance, and they always spoke so passionately about their work, which made me curious and eventually interested."

The participant also reflected on the deeper meaning of the nursing profession, which resonated with her desire to make a difference in people's lives. This realization reinforced her choice and allowed her to embrace nursing as a vocation rather than just a career.

"I chose nursing mainly because it is a profession where you care for other people, put yourself in their situation, and help them. It's not just about doing tasks or earning money; it's about connecting with patients and showing them that someone truly cares."

In addition to her family's influence, the participant found inspiration in the values and sense of purpose associated with nursing. She described how the idea of providing holistic care and addressing not just physical but also emotional needs gave her a sense of fulfillment.

"I believe nursing is unique because it allows you to care for people in ways that go beyond medicine. You see their struggles, feel their pain, and try your best to make them feel better, even if it's just holding their hand or listening to them."

This combination of familial influence and a personal connection to the profession's values became a cornerstone of the participant's journey, serving as a source of resilience

and motivation during the early and challenging stages of her nursing career.

Theme 2: Growth and Development

The participant emphasized the importance of both personal and professional growth as essential elements of her journey as a newly employed nurse. She demonstrated a clear vision for her future, outlining specific short-term and long-term goals that reflect her dedication to continuous improvement and self-betterment.

For her long-term goals, the participant expressed a desire to advance in her nursing career and pursue areas of specialization that align with her interests and aspirations. She also considered further education as a means to achieve her career objectives and deepen her expertise.

"As for long-term goals, I want to see myself grow maturely and develop my career. I want to have a specialization someday, like becoming a dialysis nurse. It's something I've been curious about because I've seen how it helps patients improve their quality of life. Taking up a master's degree is also an option for me because I believe it will open more opportunities and make me more confident in my field."

In addition to her long-term ambitions, the participant recognized the value of setting short-term goals that focus on self-discovery and personal growth. She highlighted the significance of learning more about herself and building the foundation for her professional success.

"For my short-term goals, maybe self-growth again because I want to discover new things about myself. I believe that understanding myself better will help me deal with the challenges I face at work, like managing stress or improving how I handle patients and colleagues. It's about building small habits that lead to bigger changes."

The participant also acknowledged the importance of adaptability and resilience in her growth journey, particularly as she navigates the challenges of working in a government hospital.

"I want to grow emotionally and professionally. Working here teaches you to be resourceful and creative because you deal with limited resources and still need to provide quality care. It's a test of character and patience, and I'm learning to handle that better each day."

Furthermore, she reflected on how her current experiences are shaping her confidence and professional identity. She viewed each challenge as an opportunity to learn and refine her skills, ensuring that her growth is not only about achieving goals but also about becoming a better nurse and person.

“Every day, I try to improve myself, whether it’s learning a new skill or just being more understanding with patients. I see these challenges as lessons. They’re not always easy, but they push me to grow and be better at what I do.”

The participant’s focus on both immediate and long-term growth highlights her proactive approach to her career and underscores her commitment to making meaningful contributions to her profession. Through a combination of goal-setting, adaptability, and reflection, she remains steadfast in her journey toward becoming a skilled and compassionate nurse.

Theme 3: Learning and Communication

The participant identified learning and communication as critical aspects of her development as a newly employed nurse. Working in a government hospital exposed her to diverse situations that enhanced her ability to communicate effectively and adapt to the challenges of her role. The participant shared how her communication skills evolved through daily interactions with patients, colleagues, and other healthcare professionals.

“When I first started, I was really shy and hesitant to speak with others, especially senior nurses or doctors. I didn’t know how to express myself clearly. But now, I can confidently talk to my patients and even collaborate with my colleagues. It’s something I never thought I could do, but it’s getting better every day.”

The participant reflected on how the diversity of patients she encountered in the government hospital played a significant role in developing her communication skills. These interactions provided opportunities to engage with people from different backgrounds, cultures, and walks of life, which enhanced her ability to connect and empathize with others.

“Working in a public hospital, I interact with so many people—some come from rural areas, others from different cultures. Communicating with them made me realize the importance of understanding their perspective and being patient. It has been a big achievement for me to gain confidence and communicate more effectively.”

In addition to communication, the participant underscored the value of continuous learning, particularly in clinical practices and methods. Despite the challenges of limited resources, she made significant efforts to adapt and maximize available tools to improve her nursing skills.

“For almost 10 months of working here, I’ve learned to stay strong, both physically and emotionally. Physically, I’ve built endurance because I used to get sick easily before, but now I’ve adjusted to the demands of the job. Emotionally, I’ve become more patient and composed, even when things get overwhelming.”

She attributed part of her learning to guidance from senior nurses who provided valuable support during her transition into the role.

“I’m really thankful for my senior colleagues because they’ve taught me so much. They don’t hesitate to share their knowledge or guide us when we’re struggling with something. Their mentorship has been one of the best parts of my experience so far.”

Through her exposure to various situations in the hospital, the participant also discovered the importance of effective communication in patient care. She aspired to become a stronger patient advocate by fostering open and clear communication with both patients and their families.

“I want to be someone who patients can trust and feel comfortable talking to. Good communication is key to identifying their concerns and making sure they feel cared for. I’ve learned that being a patient advocate means being their voice and ensuring they receive the best care possible.”

Overall, the participant’s experiences highlighted the interplay between learning and communication in her journey as a nurse. Through repeated exposure to challenging situations and diverse individuals, she developed greater confidence and competence, which enabled her to thrive in her role and provide better care to her patients.

Theme 4: Clinical Practice

The participant emphasized the importance of clinical practice in her journey as a newly employed nurse. She recognized that working in a government hospital provided her with valuable hands-on experience that helped her develop critical nursing skills and decision-making abilities. Despite the challenges of limited resources, she viewed these experiences as opportunities to grow and adapt.

“In a government hospital, you really learn to make the most out of what you have. We often face shortages in resources, so you have to think creatively and be resourceful. It has taught me how to prioritize patients effectively and ensure they get the care they need, even in difficult situations.”

The participant acknowledged the crucial role of proper assessment in delivering quality care. She shared how she is gradually improving her ability to assess and prioritize patients, particularly in a busy and resource-constrained environment.

“As of now, I’m still learning and slowly improving myself in terms of patient assessment. It’s not easy, especially when you have so many patients to attend to at the same time, but I’ve been trying to focus on what’s urgent and what

needs immediate attention. It's all about being thorough and making informed decisions."

Mentorship from senior nurses was another significant factor that contributed to her growth in clinical practice. She expressed gratitude for the guidance and support provided by more experienced colleagues, which helped her navigate the complexities of her role.

"I'm really thankful for my senior nurses because they've been so supportive. They guide us, correct us when needed, and share their knowledge generously. They don't make us feel bad when we don't know something. Instead, they patiently teach us, which has been a big help in building my confidence."

The participant also reflected on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected her clinical training. As a "pandemic baby," much of her initial training was conducted on simulation dummies rather than real patients, which made her transition to hands-on clinical practice more challenging.

"Since we graduated during the pandemic, a lot of our training was done on mannequins and not on actual patients. So when I started working, I felt really nervous about performing procedures like IV insertions or catheterizations on real people. But over time, with practice and support from my colleagues, I've been able to gain more confidence."

Through her work, the participant discovered areas where she wanted to improve further, such as mastering specific procedures and enhancing her technical skills. She also encouraged others to join her in the government hospital, highlighting the opportunities for growth it provided.

"I want to become an expert in IV insertions and other technical skills because I feel these are areas where I can still improve. I even tell my friends and colleagues to transfer here because I know they can enhance their skills, too. This hospital is a great place to learn if you're willing to work hard."

The participant also recognized the gravity of working in healthcare, where decisions can significantly impact lives. She understood the importance of taking her responsibilities seriously and striving for excellence in her clinical practice.

"As nurses, we deal with human lives, and every decision we make has consequences. It's not just about following procedures but also about understanding the patient's needs and making the best choices for their care. This is something I'm learning every day, and I want to keep getting better at it."

The participant's experiences in clinical practice

demonstrated her resilience and determination to excel despite the challenges she faced. By continuously learning, seeking guidance, and embracing her role's responsibilities, she is steadily building the skills and confidence needed to provide high-quality care.

Theme 5: Anxiety and Coping Strategies

The participant shared that anxiety, particularly pre-shift anxiety, was a recurring challenge she faced as a newly employed nurse. This anxiety stemmed from the unpredictability and demands of her job, as well as the pressure of being responsible for patients' lives. Despite these feelings, she found ways to identify the root causes of her anxiety and implement effective coping strategies to manage them.

"I won't deny it—every time I have a shift, I feel this heavy anxiety before going to work. It's like I'm already worrying about what could go wrong or what situations I might face. Sometimes it's the fear of making mistakes or not being able to handle an emergency properly. But I try to overcome it by centering myself and remembering why I'm here."

Prayer emerged as one of her most consistent and reliable coping mechanisms. The participant explained how taking a moment to pray before each shift helped calm her nerves and gave her the strength to face the day ahead.

"Before I start my shift, I always take a moment to pray. It helps me feel grounded and reminds me that I'm not alone in this. I ask for guidance, patience, and strength to deal with whatever the day may bring. It's my way of reassuring myself that I can do it and that I'm capable of handling my responsibilities."

In addition to prayer, the participant emphasized the importance of self-care in managing the stress and anxiety that comes with her role. She made it a point to prioritize activities that helped her relax and recharge.

"Once in a while, I make sure to pamper myself. Whether it's having a quiet meal by myself, going to a spa, or simply watching my favorite TV series, these little moments of self-care are what keep me going. It's my way of coping with all the stress I encounter at work. I've learned that you need to take care of yourself first so you can take better care of others."

The participant also discovered the value of building a support system at work. By fostering good relationships with her colleagues, she found a sense of belonging and reassurance that she wasn't alone in facing the challenges of her job.

"My colleagues have been a big help in managing my anxiety. Just knowing that they're there to guide me, especially when I'm unsure about something, gives me

confidence. Sometimes, we even share our frustrations and struggles, and it makes me feel that what I'm going through is normal and that it's okay to ask for help."

Moreover, she highlighted how learning to accept imperfections and embrace mistakes as part of the learning process helped her manage her expectations and reduce feelings of self-doubt.

"I've realized that no one is perfect, especially when you're just starting. I used to beat myself up over small mistakes, but now I try to look at them as opportunities to improve. It's not easy, but it's part of growing as a nurse. I remind myself that what's important is that I learn and do better next time."

The participant also mentioned that engaging in mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing exercises and positive visualization, helped her stay focused and calm during high-pressure situations.

"Sometimes, when I feel overwhelmed, I take a moment to breathe deeply and refocus my thoughts. I imagine myself handling a situation successfully, and it helps me regain my composure. It's a simple thing, but it works wonders, especially when I'm feeling panicked."

Despite the recurring presence of anxiety, the participant viewed it as a challenge that could be managed rather than a barrier to her growth. She expressed determination to overcome these emotional hurdles and adapt to the demands of her role.

"Anxiety is something I've learned to live with, but it doesn't define me or my ability to do my job. I think it's normal to feel scared or unsure sometimes, but what matters is how you handle it. I've grown stronger because of it, and I know I'll continue to improve as I gain more experience."

Through these reflections, the participant demonstrated resilience and resourcefulness in addressing the emotional challenges of her role. By integrating personal faith, self-care, peer support, and mindfulness into her daily routine, she has developed effective strategies to navigate her anxiety and maintain her commitment to providing compassionate care.

DISCUSSION

Inspiration

The inspiration theme emphasizes how personal ideals and familial influence impact professional choices. The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Brown & Lent, 2023) is supported by the participant's description of her family's nursing heritage and her innate desire to improve the lives of others. SCCT asserts that self-efficacy, result

expectations, and environmental factors frequently impact profession decisions (Brown & Lent, 2023). The participant's thoughts are consistent with research that highlights how cultural and familial factors influence nursing career paths (Martin et al., 2024).

The value of inspiration in nursing is supported by recent research. For example, Kakyo et al. (2024) discovered that intrinsic motivations — like empathy and the desire to help others — were essential for maintaining nursing students' dedication in the face of difficulties. Furthermore, the participant's acknowledgment of nursing as a vocation as opposed to just a career is consistent with the findings of Bai and Bai (2024) and Shen et al. (2024), who highlighted the important role that nurses' sense of purpose plays in resilience and job satisfaction.

Growth and Development

The participant's emphasis on professional and personal development is consistent with the core principles of transformational learning theory (Mezirow, 2018). A dedication to self-reflection and ongoing development — two essential components of transformative learning — is evident in her experiences establishing long-term objectives like specialization and more education.

The results are consistent with current studies on nursing professional development. According to Greco and Kraimer (2020), goal-setting and reflective practices are essential components in helping new nurses develop their professional identities. Patil (2024), who emphasized the value of resourcefulness in underfunded healthcare settings, are in line with the participant's emphasis on flexibility and resilience in resource-constrained circumstances.

Learning and Communication

Continuous learning and effective communication were found to be essential for the participants' growth. The Experiential Learning Theory (Morris, 2020), which emphasizes learning by experience, is consistent with these findings. Interactions with a variety of patients and coworkers improved the participant's cultural competency and communication abilities.

The significance of communication in nursing practice is emphasized by recent studies. For instance, the study by Siokal et al. (2023), Alimali and Alreshidi (2024), and Bahari et al. (2024) showed that better communication skills greatly increase nurse-patient relationships and patient satisfaction. Furthermore, the participant's recognition of senior nurses' mentoring is consistent with research by Moon et al. (2024) and Kramer (2024), which found that mentorship and peer support are essential for boosting the confidence and career development of new nurses.

Clinical Practice

The reality of healthcare environments with limited resources are reflected in the participant's clinical practice experiences. She showed persistence and adaptability in the face of difficulties, which are essential for career advancement. The idea that people can attain excellence by making the most of their resources, even in difficult environments, is supported by the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory (Ferreira & Ferreira, 2024).

The participant's recognition of how the COVID-19 pandemic affected her education is consistent with research showing that nursing graduates had insufficient hands-on experience during the epidemic. According to McMillan et al. (2023), for example, nurses who graduated during the pandemic first struggled with clinical competence but soon adjusted with mentorship and on-the-job training.

Anxiety and Coping Strategies

The participant's story frequently dealt with anxiety, especially anxiousness before shifts. A framework for comprehending how the participant dealt with anxiety using problem-focused and emotion-focused techniques is provided by the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (de Cordova et al., 2024). Self-care, prayer, and support networks were found to be successful coping strategies.

These results are supported by recent studies. For instance, Karaba (2024) and Sos and Melton (2025) noted that prayer and mindfulness exercises greatly lessen nurses' tension at work. Furthermore, the participant's emphasis on creating support networks at work aligns with research by Andrews et al. (2024), which found that mentorship and encouraging coworkers lower stress and improve job satisfaction among new nurses.

Synthesis

The study's findings capture the varied realities of a recently hired nurse negotiating the intricacies of public health care. The dynamic and comprehensive nature of professional nursing development is highlighted by the interaction of inspiration, development, communication, clinical practice, and coping mechanisms. These results advance our knowledge of the experiences of new nurses and point to areas that need to be improved in policy and practice, including bolstering mentorship programs, offering stress-reduction tools, and creating a positive work atmosphere.

The results have applications for nursing educators and hospital administrators. Creating formal mentorship programs and providing courses on stress management and communication could help new nurses adjust. Furthermore, especially in environments with limited

resources, including experiential learning opportunities into nursing courses can help close the knowledge gap between theory and practice.

CONCLUSION

The firsthand accounts of a recently employed nurse navigating the intricacies of public healthcare were examined in this narrative inquiry. The research emphasized the different challenges and successes that influence a new nurse's career path through the thematic lenses of inspiration, development, communication, clinical practice, and coping mechanisms.

The results highlight how important mentorship, continuous learning, and intrinsic motivation are for building resilience, a sense of professional identity, and job satisfaction. In line with theories like the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Transformational Learning Theory, the participant showed a dedication to nursing as a profession, motivated by cultural and familial values. These frameworks shed light on how career paths and flexibility in healthcare environments with limited resources are influenced by individual values, goal-setting, and reflective practices.

Furthermore, the participant's focus on effective communication and experiential learning aligns with recent studies supporting the inclusion of practical training and mentorship programs in nursing practice and education. The significance of providing nurses with coping skills to handle stress at work is further highlighted by anxiety management techniques like prayer, self-care, and support systems.

The study has beneficial implications for legislators, hospital managers, and nursing educators. New nurses can benefit from initiatives like structured mentorship programs, stress management classes, and more opportunities for hands-on learning. These can help fill knowledge gaps, promote professional development, and increase job satisfaction. Ultimately, healthcare facilities may improve patient care and results by tackling these important areas and better assisting new nurses in becoming skilled and caring professionals.

These findings underscore the need for continued efforts to provide growth-oriented, supportive cultures within the nursing profession and add to the expanding body of knowledge on nurses' early professional experiences.

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