

Productivity in the Workplace of the Master of Arts in Nursing Graduates: A Graduate Tracer Study

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Asia Pacific Journal of
Management and
Sustainable Development
Vol. 12 No. 1, pp.101-107
March 2024 Part 1
ISSN: 2782-9332 (Print)

Date Received: February 13, 2024; Date Revised: February 25, 2024; Date Accepted: February 28, 2024

Abstract – This study determined the productivity of the graduates of Master of Arts in Nursing from 2015 to 2018. This study used descriptive design with the respondents composed of 25 or 100 percent MAN graduates from 2015-2018. Adapted questionnaire from the study of Maxwell, Scott, Macfarlane, and Williamson (2010) was utilized. Graduate program has a significantly positive effect on professional and personal productivity where they have experienced career advancement, role expansion, salary raise, professional recognition, sense of fulfillment, improved time management and decision making, and increased efficiency. The graduates are deemed to be highly productive in their respective workplaces and have attained the identified student outcomes to a large degree through fostering the knowledge and skills acquired from the program.

Keywords – Productivity, Tracer Study, Workplace

Cite this article as: Magnaye, B. P. & Pring, C. C., (2024). Productivity in the Workplace of the Master of Arts in Nursing Graduates: A Graduate Tracer Study, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management and Sustainable Development*, 12(1), 101-107.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing is the largest field of healthcare professionals in the country, and as such, there is a huge variety of master's degrees in nursing available. Although the majority of all registered nurses are employed in hospitals, many are also employed in different nursing paths such as school nursing, company/industrial nursing and the academe among others. Furthermore, the range of specialization and functions of nurses varies. Nurses do anything from supervising staff to doing bedside care. There are many combined career paths as well. A Master's in nursing degree offers a registered nurse the opportunity to have tremendous influence on the future of nursing within such prestigious roles as chief nursing officer (CNO), nurse administrator, clinical nurse educator or director of education. In addition to personal and professional fulfillment, a Master's degree can lead to substantially higher salaries.

Nursing is a popular field within the medical community. It allows people to care for others or create programs that increase patients' chances of living longer and healthier lives. Nurses are always in high demand, and this trend is expected to continue in the next few years. With a master's degree, a person has a wide variety of career opportunities available. A nurse can specialize in a particular area or take a leadership role. Many degree holders choose to become nurse educators. This allows individuals to mentor others who are just beginning in the field of nursing. This helps people make positive differences and play essential roles in the continuous care around the world, which is often impossible with traditional nursing roles.

All nurses should have a commitment to continuous education. This does not mean everyone must strive toward a Ph.D., but it is an inspiring goal. Higher degrees bring respect from others in the medical community. The healthcare industry is undergoing a radical transformation. As patients are spending less time in hospitals, there is a growing trend for nursing specialists to work in home-care settings and other domains. Today's Master's programs are placing emphasis on new research and patient treatment methods and are increasing the amount of time in clinical practice.

An essential aspect of quality in higher education is the quality of the outcomes achieved. Higher education adds value by developing job-related skills and competencies that prepare students for the workplace and opined that institutions of higher education have the primary responsibility for equipping individuals with advanced knowledge and skills required for positions of responsibility in government, industry, and other sectors [1]. It is essential for any program of study to constantly evaluate its curriculum to ensure that its content remains relevant, of high quality and is in tune with the demand of the job market and one of the ways institutions do this is through tracer studies [2].

Continuous study takes up a lot of time but can increase the overall performance of a professional. With the constantly increasing demand for nurses worldwide, the demand for enhanced skills and higher-quality services

is necessary. The productivity of a Master of Arts in Nursing Graduates should be determined to further enhance their program and curriculum to the evolving needs of the healthcare institutions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the productivity of the graduates of Master of Arts in Nursing from 2018 to 2021. Specifically, it described the impact of the graduate program in terms of professional and personal productivity; determined the effect of the learning experience from the Master's degree to present job performance in terms of competence, commitment, credibility and caring; and lastly, determined the attainment of identified student outcomes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study used descriptive design to trace the graduates of MAN. The descriptive method aims to elaborate on the nature of the situation as it existed at the time of the study and to explore the causes of phenomena. A descriptive method is characterized by a collection of data that enables the researchers to describe and identify the individual, occurrences, or condition accurately by studying them as they are in nature. The study used an adapted questionnaire as the main instrument in gathering data.

Research Instrument

The researchers used an adapted survey questionnaire instrument as a standard questionnaire which was used in gathering the data. The skills part was adapted from the study of Maxwell, Scott, Macfarlane and Williamson [3], the student outcomes were taken from the LPU Graduate School Manual. The researchers administered the questionnaire to MAN graduates personally and through email. The survey questionnaire was categorized into three aspects which includes personal and professional productivity, effect of the learning experience and productivity in the workplace.

Respondents

The participants of the study include Master of Arts in Nursing Graduates from 2015 to 2018, composed of 25 or 100 percent of graduates.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers gathered information from published research sources, journals, articles, and reliable websites on the internet. Then, the researchers adapted a

questionnaire from a published research study and modified the respondents of the questionnaires. The survey questionnaire underwent validation and revisions before distributing it to the respondents of the study. The questionnaires were distributed to the 25 or 100% respondents to determine their answers from the specific objectives of the study. The gathered data were analyzed and employed in data analysis to measure and interpret the results.

Data Analysis Procedure

All data that were gathered from the questionnaire were tallied and interpreted using statistical tools to accomplish the objective. Appropriate statistical tool was utilized to analyze the survey results. Personal encoding was done, and Statistical Package for Sciences (SPSS 26) was used to interpret and analyze the data gathered. These were used to determine the skills gained from MAN program; identify the impact of taking MAN program in terms of personal and professional development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Professional and Personal Productivity in the Workplace of MAN Graduates

Table 1 below showed the impact of the master's degree to the graduates in terms of professional and personal aspects. The results showed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the degree has an impact with achieving career progression and exceeding output as the highest among the items with a weighted mean of 3.76. While applying learned skills and doing things efficiently, I got the highest score of 3.90 in terms of personal impact. Meanwhile, items 1,2, and 3 were tied with a lowest weighted mean of 3.71 in terms of professional productivity. While items 2,4 and 5 rank lowest (3.86) in terms of personal productivity.

The result was supported by American Association of College of Nursing [4] which stated that a Master of Science in nursing permits understudies to spend significant time in specific spaces of medical care relevant to their future profession plans. The source noticed that common strengths incorporate pediatric nursing, nurture the board, maternity care, etc. If an understudy chooses to get back to training full time, a standard MSN program will keep going for two academic years or approximately two years. Medical professionals with advanced educations serve in an

assortment of immediate and backhanded consideration jobs in a broad scope of training fields. Medical Attendants with graduate degrees can order six-figure pay rates and frequently ascend to the highest point of medical care initiative positions. With a new practice, openings are arising, and the interest for profoundly specific nursing abilities is rising.

Table 1
Professional and Personal Productivity in the Workplace of MAN Graduates

Professional	WM	VI	Rank
After considering your MAN Degree:	3.71	SA	4
1. I was given higher responsibility/ role expansion	3.71	SA	4
2. I was given increase in salary and benefits	3.71	SA	4
3. I have achieved career advancement/ promoted to a higher level	3.76	SA	1.5
4. I had exceeded expected outputs within the desired time frame from minimal resources	3.76	SA	1.5
5. I was able to perform multitasking and received professional recognition	3.73	SA	3
Composite Mean	3.71	SA	
Personal			
After considering your MAN Degree:			
1. I had a sense of fulfilment with my career and family			
2. Contributed tangibly and directly to development-related improvements at work.	3.86	SA	4
3. I had better time management/ Applied skills and knowledge acquired in my master's degree study toward enhancing personal development	3.90	SA	1.5
4. I had made good personal decisions for myself	3.86	SA	4
5. I had learned to set better goals and aspirations	3.86	SA	4
6. I had done personal things more efficient	3.90	SA	1.5
Composite Mean	3.88	SA	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49: Agree; 1.50-2.49: Disagree; 1.00-1.49: Strongly Disagree

2. Effect of the Learning Experience from MAN Program to Present Job Performance in terms of Competence

Table 2 shows the impact of the learning experiences of a Master of Arts Nursing Graduate in their job

performance in terms of competence. The result emphasized that a MAN graduate could demonstrate accountability and responsiveness in their chosen practice through recommendation of new ideas, methods, and changes to have a better workplace which rank the highest. Meanwhile, nurses who work in different areas in the hospital demonstrate expertise rank last in terms of competence.

Table 2.
Effect of the Learning Experience from MAN Program to Present Job Performance in terms of Competence

Competence It helps me to...	WM	VI	Rank
1. demonstrate expertise in the delivery of health care services in different fields of nursing	3.86	VMO	4.5
2. fulfill my duty as a leader who initiate change in the health care institution to meet the changing health needs of the community and society as well	3.90	VMO	2.5
3. manage the patients with sound reasoning and professional judgment	3.86	VMO	4.5
4. demonstrate accountability and responsibility in the practice of the profession by recommending new ideas, methods, or improvisation to make the work better	4.00	VMO	1
5. keep orderly and up-to-date records/charts and submits ahead of time with accuracy, reliability, complete and presentable reports	3.90	VMO	2.5
Composite Mean	3.90	VMO	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Very much observed (VMO); 2.50-3.49: Much observed (MO); 1.5-2.49: Less Observed (LO); 1.00-1.49: Not Observed (NO)"

Nurses' capability covers a wide scope of information, execution, and capacity in different fields. Nursing care environments need a nurse who can work independently at a competent level. Preparing students to create constructive, communicative relationships is essential to nursing practice because it enables students to respect and provide safe nursing care for patients[5].

Finishing a postgraduate education and acquiring the qualifications to focus on patients more readily can permit a healthcare professional to feel a feeling of achievement and expert fulfillment. A nurse with a master's degree can use their expertise in their high-level investigations to offer mentorship and backing to medical caretakers with local insight. The chance to guide others can prompt satisfaction and cooperative freedoms to help your team develop their skills. Another

thing that a nurse with a master's degree can gain is expanding one's intellectual capacity through research studies required to graduate in that degree. And lastly, because of advanced employment opportunities exercising a greater level of influence within the organization, policy, and healthcare practices would be easier, thus allowing the development of the procedures that directly affect patient outcomes, healthcare costs, and organizational success[6].

In contrary to the results, where expertise in other areas in the hospital of MAN graduates ranked last, nursing graduates with a higher degree had gained significantly in their skills to be flexible in practice, communicate, and work as part of a team—problem-solving as an outcome of completing a master’s degree in nursing[7]. Graduates make substantial gains in leadership and management capabilities because of their higher degree. These capabilities are necessary as nurses take the lead in many areas of healthcare.

Table 3

Effect of the Learning Experience from MAN Program to Present Job Performance in terms of Commitment

Commitment It helps me to...	WM	VI	Rank
1. accept willingly and performing leadership roles in various activities with an exceptional sense of duty and dependability	4.00	VMO	2
2. provide necessary support, service, and assistance for the welfare of the organization	4.00	VMO	2
3. demonstrate passion for execution and sense of urgency in all tasks	3.95	VMO	4.5
4. transcend personal needs when organizational concerns need to be attended to	3.95	VMO	4.5
5. participate in making decisions and implement the activities based on strategic plans.	4.00	VMO	2
Composite Mean	3.98	VMO	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Very much observed (VMO); 2.50-3.49: Much observed (MO); 1.5-2.49: Less Observed (LO); 1.00-1.49: Not Observed (NO)

Table 3 reveals the results about the effect of the learning experience from MAN program to present job performance in terms of commitment. The results of the

table conveyed that in terms of commitment, nurses who had their advanced education in nursing can be liable to be a leader, give support and welfare to their work and participate in the major decision making in their area tied to having the highest rank of a weighted mean of 4.. While in terms of passion and urgency execution of all tasks and going above their personal limit when organizational tasks need to be attended ranked the last that has a weighted mean of 3.95.

With the aging nurse leader workforce, it is essential to understand factors influencing nurses' leadership aspirations to develop and sustain nursing leadership capacity. Nurses' leadership self-efficacy is essential for their inspiration and aim to seek after an administration profession. Results propose that medical attendants' initiative self-adequacy can be impacted by giving administration dominance encounters and mentorship support openings. Initiative progression arrangements should incorporate procedures to upgrade medical attendants' authority self-viability and increment forefront medical caretakers' advantage in influential positions[8].

Table 4

Effect of the Learning Experience from MAN Program to Present Job Performance in terms of Credibility

Credibility	WM	VI	Rank
1. become a model of leadership who adheres to the policies, rules, and regulations of the organization	3.95	VMO	4
2. practice honesty, fairness, and transparency in all my transactions with the stakeholders	4.00	VMO	2
3. identify and recognize personal, moral, and spiritual values and beliefs	4.00	VMO	2
4. demonstrate professionalism in dealing with colleagues	3.90	VMO	5
set oneself as an example of moral and ethical behavior to all stakeholders	4.00	VMO	2
Composite Mean	3.97	VMO	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Very much observed (VMO); 2.50-3.49: Much observed (MO); 1.5-2.49: Less Observed (LO); 1.00-1.49: Not Observed (NO)

Table 4 shows the effect of the graduate of MAN program in presenting their job performances in terms of credibility. The items that rank the highest with a weighted mean of 4, indicates graduate from MAN have practice honesty, fairness and transparency. It was also tied with the item that states that nurses with a degree in nursing can identify different values and sets themselves as an example of moral and ethical behavior to all stakeholders.

Meanwhile, the item that rank the least which has a weighted mean of 3.90 showed that they lack professionalism in demonstrating in dealing with their colleagues. Nursing capability covers a wide scope of information, execution, and capacity in different fields. Nursing care environments need a nurse who can work independently at a competent level. According to Jouzi, Mohammadi, and Vanaki [5], preparing students to create constructive, communicative relationships is essential to nursing practice because it enables students to respect and provide safe nursing care for patients.

Blazun and Vosner [9] tackles the student's perspective about the competencies of enrolling in the undergraduate nursing program. The research study was performed among the postgraduate master's degree students in nursing student which was then resulted that the vast majority of the members felt that they are more capable enough in their consciousness of various jobs, obligations, and elements of a medical caretaker along with the capacity to rehearse inside the setting of expert, moral, administrative and legitimate codes. However, they felt less competent in leadership, management, and team competencies.

Table 5 determines the effect of the learning experience from MAN program to present job performance in terms of caring. This determines that a graduate of MAN program has the capability of being open, cooperative, flexible, and respectful to their colleagues which is why it was ranked the highest with two other items in the table respectively, having the diversity to respect the difference if others and participating to uplift the welfare of the community. While the item that ranks the last states that nurses who graduated in the advanced program of nursing does not demonstrate the values that the organization wants to achieve in their vision and mission.

Table 5
Effect of the Learning Experience from MAN Program to Present Job Performance in terms of Caring

Caring	WM	VI	Rank
1. Foster the sense of family in the workplace by helping co-workers to accomplish certain task	3.86	VMO	4.5
2. Identify and apply knowledge of personal and group processes skills in specific tasks in resolving conflicts.	3.86	VMO	4.5
3. Demonstrate the significant values of the organization in achieving its vision and mission	3.81	VMO	6
4. Build relationships to support group effectiveness by being open, cooperative, flexible, and respectful of others and being a team player	4.00	VMO	2
5. Accept diversity and demonstrate respect for difference in acceptance of cultures, ideas, opinions, and beliefs.	4.00	VMO	2
6. Participate actively in uplifting the welfare of the community especially the less privileged sectors.	4.00	VMO	2
Composite Mean		3.92	VMO

Scale: 3.50-4.00: *Very much observed (VMO)*; 2.50-3.49: *Much observed (MO)*; 1.5-2.49: *Less Observed (LO)*; 1.00-1.49: *Not Observed (NO)*

Indeed, Editorial [6] emphasized the benefits of pursuing a master's degree in nursing. Some of the benefits mentioned were flexibility which can balance self from professionalism. Other benefits mentioned are professional development and the ability to meet the demands in healthcare. Thus, this supports the result of table 5 where it was mentioned that graduates of Masters of Arts in Nursing can be flexible and open in the field of profession.

Table 6
Productivity in the Workplace of MAN Graduates in terms of Student Outcomes

I become productive in fulfilling my duties through	WM	VI	Rank
1. practicing safe and quality nursing care in the area of specialization utilizing the nursing process as framework for nursing practice.	3.90	HP	2.5
2. providing advanced nursing care to critically ill client across the life span in accordance with the nursing law and other relevant legislations	3.86	HP	6
3. exhibiting commitment to lifelong learning through continuous professional education and training.	3.90	HP	2.5
4. demonstrating ability to manage health care facility and advocate implementation of DOH health programs and thrust	3.86	HP	6
5. speaking well with confidence in public regarding topics relevant to health promotion and disease prevention.	3.90	HP	6
6. participating in continuous quality improvement to solve clinical problems in collaboration with quality assurance/ nursing audit team.	3.90	HP	2.5
7. engaging in health-related research resulting to improvement of patient care and conduct advanced research to develop new theory.	3.90	HP	2.5
Composite Mean	3.88	HP	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Highly Productive (HP); 2.50-3.49: Productive (P); 1.50-2.49: Less Productive (LP); 1.00-1.49: Not Productive (NP)

Table 6 shows the productivity in the workplace of MAN graduates in terms of student outcomes. The four items, specifically, item 1, 3, 6 and 7 were tied in the highest spot with a weighted mean of 3.90, emphasized quality care with the help of continuous learning and also in engaging to health-related research. On the other hand, items 2, 4, 5 which states that providing duties

that need advanced care, managing health care facilities and communication in the public rank the lowest.

Considering the healthcare developments that have raised the requirements for nursing, many countries are actively developing postgraduate nursing curricula and cultivating advanced nursing practices that are directly engaged in clinical work. Attaining a higher degree needs an ample measure of commitment, intricate work, and persistence. Finishing a postgraduate education and acquiring the qualifications to focus on patients more readily can permit a healthcare professional to feel a feeling of achievement and expert fulfillment. A nurse with a master's degree can use their expertise in their high-level investigations to offer mentorship and backing to medical caretakers with local insight. The chance to guide others can prompt satisfaction and cooperative freedoms to help your team develop their skills. Another thing that a nurse with a master's degree can gain is expanding one's intellectual capacity through research studies required to graduate in that degree [6].

In contrary to the items that rank the lowest, according in the article of [6], nurses with a degree have a higher chance of employment opportunities exercising a greater level of influence within the organization, policy, and healthcare practices would be easier, thus allowing the development of the procedures that directly affect patient outcomes, healthcare costs, and organizational success. This means that a degree holder in nursing provides a reliable organizational skill, nursing practices and communication for the betterment of the health status which oppose the results of table 6.

Furthermore, Drennan [7] stated that the results of his study found that nursing graduates with a higher degree had gained significantly in their skills to be flexible in practice, communicate and work as part of a team problem-solving as an outcome of completing a master's degree in nursing. Graduates make substantial gains in leadership and management capabilities as a consequence of their higher degree. These capabilities are necessary as nurses take the lead in many areas of healthcare.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) program significantly benefits graduates both professionally and personally. Participants reported career advancement, increased salary, and a greater sense of fulfillment. The program equips graduates with the knowledge and skills to excel in their current roles, demonstrating competence, commitment, and strong ethical practices. These

findings suggest that the MAN program effectively achieves its intended learning outcomes.

Following these conclusions, the study recommends several actions. Firstly, it highlights the value of this study as a foundation for program improvement. Regularly conducting tracer studies allows the program to monitor its effectiveness and identify areas for enhancement. Comparing results across years can provide even more valuable data for improvement. Secondly, the study emphasizes the need for a curriculum that adapts to societal changes and employer demands. Regularly reviewing the curriculum ensures graduates possess the most relevant skills for high employability. Finally, the study suggests further research involving employer evaluations of graduate performance. This would add valuable perspective and potentially reduce bias present in self-reported data.

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