



## แรงกระตุ้นในการพัฒนาความสามารถของพยาบาลในโรงพยาบาล ในประเทศเวียดนาม\*

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### บทคัดย่อ

ความสามารถมีผลต่อคุณภาพการพยาบาลในหลายแง่มุมและส่งผลต่อผลการรักษาคนไข้อย่างมีนัยสำคัญ พยาบาลต้องเผชิญกับความท้าทายมากมายระหว่างเส้นทางการพัฒนาตนเองเพื่อเป็นผู้ที่มีแรงกระตุ้นในการพัฒนาความสามารถของตนเองให้ผ่านพ้นอุปสรรคต่าง ๆ ระหว่างการพัฒนาความสามารถของพยาบาล การศึกษาครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาแรงกระตุ้นในการพัฒนาความสามารถของพยาบาลที่ปฏิบัติการอยู่ในศูนย์การรักษานในประเทศเวียดนาม โดยใช้รูปแบบการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ ผู้ให้ข้อมูลหลัก คือ พยาบาลที่สมัครใจเข้าร่วมจำนวน 25 คน คัดเลือกโดยการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเฉพาะเจาะจงจากโรงพยาบาล Cho Ray ในนครโฮจิมินห์ ประเทศเวียดนามและใช้การเก็บข้อมูลโดยการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก มีการถอดบทสัมภาษณ์ที่บันทึกด้วยเทปบันทึกเสียงและวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพที่รวบรวมมาโดยใช้การวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหา

ผู้ให้ข้อมูลหลักในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ได้ระบุเหตุผลมากมายที่กระตุ้นให้พวกเขาพัฒนาความสามารถของตนเอง ดังนี้ 1) ความต้องการในการเติบโตและก้าวหน้าในวิชาชีพการพยาบาล 2) ความต้องการในการเติบโตและก้าวหน้าส่วนบุคคล 3) การส่งเสริมภาพลักษณ์และคุณค่าของวิชาชีพการพยาบาล และ 4) ความรักที่มีต่อคนไข้และความสนใจในการพยาบาล ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่าเหตุผลที่กระตุ้นกระบวนการพัฒนาความสามารถของพยาบาลที่เข้าร่วมครอบคลุมทั้งขอบเขตการพัฒนาส่วนบุคคลและเพื่อส่วนร่วม ความรู้ที่ได้จากการศึกษาสามารถนำไปใช้ประโยชน์ต่อผู้จัดการด้านพยาบาล ผู้ให้การศึกษาด้านการพยาบาล และบุคลากรสำคัญอื่น ๆ ในการสร้างกลยุทธ์การพัฒนาความสามารถที่มีประสิทธิภาพเพื่อช่วยเหลือพยาบาลในการพัฒนาความสามารถของตนเองให้บรรลุมาตรฐานการพยาบาลระดับสูง

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## Motivations of Competency Development among Nurses at Hospital in Vietnam\*

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### Abstract

Competency affects several aspects of quality of nursing care and has a significant contribution to the patient outcomes. To become competent individuals, nurses face with numerous challenges on the journey of competency development. The concern is centered on what motivates them to overcome such barriers in order to improve their capabilities. This study aims to investigate the motivations underlying competency development of professional nurses practicing at clinical settings in Vietnam. The qualitative research design was applied with key informants of 25 nurses. The research was conducted at one national general hospital in Vietnam. Data collection was carried out using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Tape-recorded interviews were verbatim transcribed and content analysis was used to analyze the data.

The key informants of this study identified numerous reasons that motivated them to develop their individual competencies. There were: 1) A demand for nursing profession growth and development; 2) A need for their own personal growth and development; 3) Enhancing nursing profession image and values; and 4) Patient and nursing profession devotion. These findings suggested that the reasons motivating process of competency development among nurses include both intra and extra-personal domains. Implications would benefit nursing managers, nursing professional educators, and other significant personnel to pursue effective competency development strategies to facilitate nurses toward their journey in achieving quality nursing care.

**Keywords:** Competency development, motivation, nursing services, Vietnam.

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## Introduction

Nurses constitute the backbone of the healthcare system in all countries.<sup>1</sup> Competency of nurses is vital to a safe nursing practice and is an essential component that determines the quality of nursing services.<sup>2</sup> Across a broad field of care, health issues as well as changing of health care needs stipulate that nurses be capable of performing optimally and assuming mounting responsibilities. As the largest health care workforce, nurses apply their knowledge, skills, and experience to care for the various and changing needs of patients. A majority of patient care demands is centered on nurses' work. Nurses thusly must be proficient in providing care for patients.<sup>3</sup>

Over the years, in order to stay with the changing pattern of diseases and increasing of health care needs in Vietnam, the Vietnamese health care sector has strengthened and applied model equipment, and high technologies in terms of diagnosis, treatment and caring for patients. Indeed, the health care service has achieved certain successfulness; nonetheless, it has been faced with many challenges. The level of health care in Vietnam overall is still low compared with the international level, with the consequence that not only is there inadequate preparation of health care professionals, but the provision of services is also compromised through lack of competencies of health care professionals which includes nurses.<sup>4</sup>

Similar to other countries, in Vietnam, nurses encompass the largest group of healthcare personnel employed in the health sector as well as elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly, they exhibit a vital role in providing health care services to patients. However, nursing professionals in Vietnam have been under the supervisory of medical professionals. Most nurses are inactive and believe they are physicians' assistants and

thereby take care of their patients as per routine activities following medical physicians' orders without critical thinking and self-decision making. In addition, since a large number of Vietnamese nurses possess just a secondary level (2-year education program) in nursing, they have work in hospitals and clinical settings as workers and focus on medical techniques. Vietnamese nurses are very traditional technical as well as task-oriented; mainly focused on completing the tasks.<sup>5</sup>

In the recent decades, the holistic nursing practice has been applying in Vietnam requires professional nurses need to go beyond the focus of medical techniques and task-oriented. In other words, they need to further acquire various knowledge and skills, beyond the focus of basic knowledge and technical foundation skills that they have been educated and trained on during their nursing education courses, in order to become competent individuals. Furthermore, in response to regional as well as international strategies of improving quality of nursing care, Vietnam has proposed numerous schemes in an effort of enhancing this. Among these strategies, the development of competencies of nurses has been concerned.<sup>6</sup> However, numerous of factors that affect the development of competencies among nurses practicing in clinical setting such as individual experience, working environment, opportunity taking, motivation, knowledge, or individual attributes.<sup>7</sup> In which, motivation is one of the important factors influencing competencies among nurses practicing in clinical environment as well as upon their competency development. Nayeri and Jafarpour.<sup>8</sup> mention that there is a direct relationship between motivation and clinical competence of nurses<sup>8</sup>. Al-Jishi<sup>9</sup> also indicates that the more motivated nurses are the more satisfied with their performances and the more motivated nurses are the less willing to quit their jobs. Losing motivation affects nurses' performance negatively.



According to Dang<sup>10</sup> numerous of Vietnamese nurses have been practicing in an unsupportive working environment with low income and burnt-out conditions; especially, nurses who are working in clinical settings. Besides, images as well as values of Vietnamese nursing profession still remain low<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, most of nurses practicing in clinical setting in Vietnam engage to improve their own competencies<sup>11</sup>. The concern is that what motivates them to overcome the difficulties to develop their individual competencies.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivations of nurses practicing at clinical settings in Vietnam to develop their own competencies. It is expected that this understanding would benefit significant stakeholders in establishing appropriate strategies to support nurses in achieving the expectation competencies.

## Research methodology

**Design:** A qualitative research approach was selected in this study by allowing the voice of Vietnamese nurses practicing at clinical settings to be heard, thusly providing opportunity to actually truly discover how nurses perceive what motivate them to develop their individual competencies.

**Setting and key informants:** There were twenty-five nurses who participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used to recruit the key informants. Of these key informants, there were sixteen staff nurses, five managers, two administrators, and two nurse teachers. Purposive sampling was applied to recruit the key informants. The study was conducted in Cho Ray Hospital, one of the biggest national general hospitals in Vietnam which is located in District 5 of Ho Chi Minh City.

The predetermined criteria for the key informants included: who has worked in nursing profession for at least 2 years and willing to evolve in the study and share information and experience regarding research

topic.

**Ethical considerations:** Ethical approval was both obtained from the KhonKaen University Ethics Committee in Human Research and the Research Division of Cho Ray Hospital. An information sheet, invitation letter, and consent form were sent to all participants directly with a clearly explanation about purpose, methods, procedures, potential risks and benefits of the study. Participation was voluntary and written informed consent was obtained. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Data collection:** Data collection was conducted in 2015. After obtaining permission for collecting data, the researcher entered the sites for establishing a rapport and developing a trusting relationship with nurses and other healthcare personnel in the setting. The data were gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. There were twenty individual in-depth interviews and three focus group discussions were produced. Each interview participants in this study gave one to two times of interview, lasting from 30 to 90 minutes. The interviews took place at a venue convenient to the participants in an effort of increasing the convenience and comfort to the participants as well as the successfulness of the interview. Each focus group discussion was composed of four to six members. Many of these participants had been involved in the in-depth interview situation before. The researcher acted as moderator to direct the participants regarding the topic to be discussed and to ensure that all voices of the participants to be heard. All the interviews were digitally recorded, with the participants' permission, and supplemented with detailed take notes. The research participants were asked to describe what motivate nurses to develop their own nursing competencies.

**Data analysis:** Content analysis was applied to analyze the data. The analysis and synthesis process were immediately conducted at the completion of each individual interview and focus group discussion session.



For The data gathered from in-depth interview, the tape recorder was heard and transcribed carefully. All of the transcriptions were then read several times and the key words or terms throughout the transcription were highlighted and noted. The coding then was made. The focus group data was also analyzed in the same format. The final emerging themes and categories were established.

## Findings

The nurses identified numerous of reasons encouraged them to learn more in order to enhance their competencies. There were a demand for nursing profession growth and development, a need for their own personal growth and development, enhancing nursing profession image and values as well as patient and nursing profession devotion. It was important to note that, some of these motivations were interrelated and overlapped.

### **A need for nursing profession growth and development**

Professional growth and development, including enhancing quality of nursing care and nursing services, was one of the essential reasons motivated the nurse participants participated in this study to improve their individual competencies. All of the nurse participants described a need for professional growth and development. Most of nurses experienced some forms of disjunction between the reality of traditional nursing education and training and requirements of modern philosophy in nursing care, such as holistic caring, as ideal of what a nurse expected to be.

For these nurses, practicing in the traditional model became a contradiction, whereby there was no congruency in their nursing professional and their own personal lives. They explained that although nursing profession in Vietnam has been changing much recently, it has still been affected strongly by the traditional model, medical model. Their daily activities

in taking care of patients were seemed task-oriented and just according physicians' orders and focused on disease care; meanwhile the requirements of holistic nursing practice nowadays required nurses need to go beyond the things from traditional model. They felt unsatisfied and disconnected with traditional nursing model. That was a critical reason motivated the nurses to engage in improving their capability.

A nurse with more than twenty years experienced in nursing complained: "I could not see the improvement in our career since I started to be a nurse. Nothing changes...our daily activities (nurses' activities) were just based on the medical doctors' orders. That's all...". That was the reason she would like to improve her competencies: "That's why we need to improve ourselves. I would see what happen, why we (nursing profession) just step behind others (other professions)". In the same line, a head nurse concerned:

"Our nurses just ... I mean very task-oriented. When we (nurses) have been trained in nursing schools, just focused on technical skills to response for the tasks...just task-oriented nursing education model. Just learned how to do and finish a lot of tasks. Nowadays... changing...Requirement of applying holistic nursing care...So, I often encourage them (nurses) to study more to improve their capacity and develop our profession (nursing profession) and adapt to the increasing needs and requirements. However..."

(Participant ID 22)

"Upgrading own personal nursing level facilitate us to achieve update knowledge. Nowadays, applying information technology into education, so we can access information easily"

(Participant ID 11)

Another nurse (ID 03) shared her experiences "Continuing learning to develop my nursing competency and to develop our nursing profession".

Improving competency to enhancing quality of nursing care and nursing services was also a main



reason described by the research participants. One nurse teacher participant commented if nurses were broad and deep knowledgeable they would provide care for patients more effectively:

“When we explain somethings to patients we need to apply what we have been learned into our explanation. To do so will create trustiness from the patients, they will not disregard us. Nurses with high knowledge will care for patients better”.

Likewise, another participant (ID 07), with fifteen years of nursing recognized the importance of advanced learning to improve self-knowledge to take care of patients effectively and care for relatives “...So important! With high knowledge we will take care of patients effectively, we care for ourselves and our family”. In the same line, another male nurse (ID 20) with his 8-year experienced mentioned the requirement of nursing care in a particular working environment:

“...In the Post-operative Unit, nurses need to attend specific course to achieve advanced knowledge to take care of patients with severe conditions after surgery”.

The motivation of improving competency among nurses because of the development of nursing profession was also supported by the data gathered from the focus group discussion sessions in which the participants expressed a similar feeling:

“You see, while others disciplines, such as medicine, there are so many professionals with high levels, such as master or PhD. However, for us (nursing profession...scarcely...We need to improve ourselves to achieve the requirements both certification levels and quality of nursing care requirements”

(FDG participant ID 18)

#### **A need for personal growth and development**

In addition to growth and develop nursing profession, the participants also described their motivations of improving their competencies were because of their own personal growth and development. There were several personal reasons identified in this

study included for achieving high knowledge in order to improve individual competencies; for meeting required graduation levels in nursing; for achieving high professional position; or getting high salary; seeking learning as well as relaxing environment; and so on.

A 23-year experienced nurse participant (ID 01) stated: “Continue studying because of my own personal development, to enhance my own nursing competencies”. Similarly, “Enhancing knowledge is my striving way. Everyone wants to be at a highest achievement. So, we need to effort to enhance our knowledge” (stated the nurse participant ID 03).

Another female nurse concerned: “...Study to improve my knowledge and skills to in order to care of patients better and improve my personal values. If I don’t study, I will step behind others, need to study continuing and effort on my best”.(Participant ID 16)

Likewise, a male nurse with nine years experienced in nursing shared his experiences as studying nursing in baccalaureate degree.

“I have controlled my emotion better than before since I have attended this course (bachelor of nursing). During upgrading my knowledge, I have opportunities to investigate and I have controlled myself. I understand the patients more and put myself to their conditions. Communication skills are also more effectively than before”.

(Participant ID 09)

#### **A nurse participant interviewee expected:**

“I would also like to enhance my position, rising to achieve higher position. I would like tomorrow I will be better than today. So, I need to develop my nursing competencies”.

(Participant ID 19)

On the other hand, numerous of participants indicated that the motivations of their continuing learning were for meeting the nursing professional qualification required nationally as well as internationally. A female nurse (ID 10) concerned: “...Need satisfy



nursing education levels. Secondary nurse level will not be used anymore”.

**This was in accordance with concerned of another female nurse:**

“Studying to improve my nursing competency, and don’t be discharged. I don’t want to be discharged because of unsatisfying nursing education level requirement”.

(Participant ID 16)

“I want to be competent nurse, so firstly I need to improve myself”

(FDG Participant ID 01)

What’s more, three nurse participants indicated that, besides the above reasons of improving their capability, they would like to upgrade their graduation nursing levels in order to earn more money. A 15-year experienced female nurse (ID 07) stated: “I have upgraded my degree from secondary to bachelor, firstly, for enhancing my salary, secondly for improving my knowledge to take care of patients”. In the same line, another female nurse shared her thinking:

“Why we need to (nurses) study continuing? ...To improve our competency, to do an extra work to earn money, to be a head nurse, to get high salary, etc. for me, I am studying here (a private nursing education institution) just to regularize, to satisfy the degree requirement, but, actually, study to achieve higher knowledge....(She means study in this private nursing education institution is not have quality)”.

(Participant ID 04)

There were participants expressed that they would like to upgrade in bachelor degree (formal nursing education) because of very high pressure working environment and burn-out always: “Worked so hard, so I went to school for relaxing” (FDG Participant ID 12).

“...starving...and every day do the same things... routine. We wish to go to school for relaxing and learning more”

(Participant ID 24)

**The findings were supported by the views gathered from focus group discussion:**

“I would like to learn more to read documents... because with a low nursing education level, difficult to understand when read documents...or when medical doctors instruct me I can understand easily”

(FDG participant ID 18)

“Nurses’ knowledge is insufficient prepared, so we need to study to improve our capacities”

(FDG participant ID 40)

**Enhancing nursing profession image and values**

There were numerous of nurse participants expressed that currently the attitudes of community toward nursing profession seemed negatively. The public nursing image has been really low. Nurses are low position within the society. These were one of the reasons why the nurses would like to improve their own competencies to improve quality of nursing care in order to change the thinking of people in the community about nursing profession towards positively. The nursing image and values, according to their expectation, therefore would be improved.

**A nurse teacher participant expressed:**

“In my perception, cannot stop studying. Why? During our working, to be respectful by others, we need to present our capacity. Not only basic knowledge, need acquiring advanced knowledge. So we will be confident when dealing with any situation. Medical doctors will trust us and they feel satisfied when work with us. Or even when we discuss with doctors about somethings, because medical doctors are not correct every time, we can share, they will appreciate and thank us”.

In the same line, another female nurse (ID 03) explored: “...To be respected (respected from other people), we (nurses) need to have knowledge. Yes, because of self-esteem, we need to improve our



competency". In an indirect way, another nurse participant with 15-year experienced (ID 07) shared the reason why she engaged to improve her own capacity: "I feel uncomfortable, I fret because of disrespect from MDs and others. So I need to improve my capacity to help patients and to affirm myself".

This was also the view of 9-year experienced nurse (ID 12) "I think we need to enhance our competency, so they (patients and community) will recognize our efforts. They will understand and value us".

### **Patient and nursing profession devotion**

Admiringly, there were some participants expressed their motivations of improving their nursing competencies that were not because of earning high salary or getting high position or being respectfulness from others; they just improve their capacities because of a simple but significant thing "Patient and nursing profession devotion".

#### **A female participant shared:**

"I love them (patients), love them very much. They are so pitied. Reminding myself, I need to improve my competencies more and more to help them...When they (nurses) are interested in nursing profession, sure, they will try to learn, reach information, discuss with colleagues to improve their knowledge and capacity. Because they wish to care for patients well"

#### **Another participant shared her feeling as a nurse:**

"I was interested in nursing at the beginning. How significant! (Nursing profession is very significant). It (nursing profession) becomes part of my life. I feel happy during taking care of patients as I have contributed my part to their lives (the nurse involves into the patients' lives and shares the suffering of the patients). I remind me that I need to be better and better to help them".

These were in line with focus group discussion participants' views.

"We are nurses, our goal is care for patients better and better...because of patients' health and well-being, we need to improve our competencies"

### **Discussion**

Regarding the research topic, the participants were asked to share and discuss what motivated them to improve their individual competencies. The main reasons identified by the participants as the motivators for their journey of improving individual competencies involved both intra and extra-personal domains. The knowledge generated from this study was also supported from the literature.

The foremost reason that motivated professional nurses to develop their own competencies concerned to the demands of growth and development of both nursing profession and individuals. These demands were interrelated and support each other. These findings are somehow consistent with the findings in previous studies.<sup>8,12,13</sup> For example, a qualitative study of Sharoff on motivations of professional registered nurses to become competent individuals indicated that the motivators for nurses to achieve higher level of competency included both needs for nursing profession and individual development. The registered nurses engaged to become competent individuals in an effort of contributing their capacities to the development of nursing profession.<sup>12</sup> Nayeri and Jafarpour also revealed that a need for achievement among nurses motivated them to develop their own competencies in order to improve quality of care<sup>8</sup>. All participants in the present study perceived big gaps occurred between the reality of traditional nursing training and requirements of modern philosophy in nursing care in Vietnam which motivated them to develop their capability in order to fill out the gaps, which contributes to the development of nursing profession in Vietnam.

Murphy, Cross, and McGuire<sup>13</sup> confirmed that knowledge has become one of the most important



resources of the twenty-first century. To become knowledge individuals, health care professionals are required to make prompt adjustments to new developments in clinical practice, accessing new areas of know-how and experience. The participants in this study perceived that traditional nursing education in Vietnam no longer satisfied the participants which is very technical and task-oriented as well as extremely focused on completion of a goal. The health care tasks of both physicians and nurses in clinical settings are focused entirely on the disease process and restoring the patients back to a state of free of disease. Meanwhile, holistic nursing applied requires nurses need to meet higher competency levels. The gaps between what the nurses had been learned and the requirements of holistic nursing care currently motivated them to become a competent nurse with expectation of achieving greater personal and professional self-fulfillment. Nurses were inadequate knowledge and skills to serving patients; the quality of nursing care therefore has been limited. The participants were therefore fiercely committed to seeking broader and deeper knowledge which could support them practicing in a holistic manner.

The findings identified from this study show that nurses are currently still seemed as submissive hospital servants lacking professional status and independent responsibilities. Most of nurses' activities and performances are currently still dependent on the physicians' orders. In the recent decades, Vietnam has opened the geopolitical boundaries to reinforce the relations with many countries. Socioeconomic in Vietnam recently has been dramatically improved. The health care needs have been increased quickly. The Ministry of Health of Vietnam has begun to concern and encourage as well as require nurses to advance their qualifications and capacities in order to response to the increasing of the health care needs<sup>14</sup>. These have been one of the reasons encouraged nurses to improve

their individual competencies. The participants awarded and recognized that holistic nursing care is not just focus on caring for physical manner but also psychological, spiritual as well as social aspects of clients.

In addition to the achieving higher knowledge and skills, numerous personal reasons of improving nurses' competencies were also identified by the participants, including a need for meeting required graduation levels in nursing, for achieving high professional position, getting high salary; seeking learning as well as relaxing environment. These findings were also supported by the findings of previous studies<sup>8,13</sup>. Murphy and colleagues reviewed the literature to discover the motivation of nurses to participate in continuing professional education in Ireland found that the main motivators for nurses to participate in continuing nursing education in order to improve their own competencies were the expectation of increased opportunities for promotion<sup>13</sup>. Nayeri and Jafarpour investigated the relationship between clinical competence and motivation needs of nurses based on the McClelland theory also revealed that a significant positive relation with clinical competence and need for power and high salary<sup>8</sup>. Leaving work for school is also one of the ways that some participants applied in an effort of refreshing themselves and supporting energies for their continuing taking care of patient more effectively. The participants complained that they have been "burnt-out" always from nursing. They have worked very hard and nursing is seemed to very taxing to them, extremely demanding and not very rewarding. They complained that they were too busy taking care of clients and forgot to take care of themselves. Sometimes "We don't know who we are" or "Day by day...we work too hard....Starving...ok...go to school". Even the reason expressed by the participants was seemed as negative thinking and quite selfish; however, it's the truth and it has been occurred in the reality: "Worked so hard, so



I went to school” and “I have free time there (school) to take care myself, enjoy life”. There has a reality that some nurses were motivated to leave the medical field for personal self-care with an expectation that their competency as well as their well-being are ensured, they will take care of patients better. As state by Dossy and Keegan (2008): “Nurses are wounded healers. As nurses, we are often tempted to ignore our own woundedness. We must learn to acknowledge our wounds, as well as to recognize our strengths. When a nurse and a client who come together embrace their woundedness, healing occurs for both”<sup>15</sup>. In the present study, the participants engaged to seek relaxation, keep away from burnout at workplace by attending continuing nursing education courses. By this way, they had not only opportunities to improve needed knowledge and skills but also refresh themselves in order to take better care of patients.

In a real situation that nursing profession in Vietnam has lower position, poor image and values compared to other disciplines; therefore, a need for enhancing Vietnamese nursing profession’s image and values was one of the critical motivators for nurses in improving their own competencies. This finding was also supported by the finding from other studies. Nayeri and Jafarpour investigated the motivational factors influencing nurses’ clinical competence, the results showed that the needs for affiliation motivate clinical competencies among nurses<sup>8</sup>. Adib-Hajbaghery and Dianati also believed that nursing profession needs social, artistic, and seeking characteristics such social behavior and spirit of cooperation<sup>16</sup>. The motivators for participation in competency development of nurses were improving self-esteem and confidence<sup>13</sup>. The participants in the present study have engaged in improving their competencies because they wish to contribute to the improvement of image and value of nursing profession in Vietnam. As indicated by the participants, the public image of nursing profession in Vietnam has been

really poor; the position of nurse professionals in the society compared with other has been low. These motivated nurses to improve their own competencies in an effort of improving quality of nursing care which would lead to change the attitudes of people in the community about nursing profession towards positively.

Devotion for patients as well as nursing profession was also identified as the important motivator for nurses to develop individual competencies. This finding is somehow consistent with Adib-Hajbaghery and Dianati indicating that nursing profession needs helping others, sense of responsibility, and love for others<sup>16</sup>. In addition, the nurse participants in a qualitative research of Khomeiran and colleagues on factors affecting the clinical competence among nurses confirmed that what makes their success in the workplace is their willingness to ask questions and get help from others, such as from doctor or nurse assistant, in order to take care of the patient in an optimal way. They preferred their patients than their pride<sup>17</sup>.

## Conclusion

This qualitative research aims to investigate the motivations of competency development among nurses practicing in clinical settings in Vietnam. There were numerous of reasons that encouraged nurses to develop their individual competencies, including both intra and extra-personal domains. These included a need for developing of nursing profession in Vietnam as well as for nurses themselves. Furthermore, with an effort of improving Vietnamese nursing image and values as well as the social position of nurses themselves, the nurses were strongly motivated to develop their competencies. In addition, devotion for patients and nursing profession were significant reasons that the nurses effort to improve themselves in order to take care of their patients most effectively. The knowledge generated from the study would assist to



establish an effectively and appropriately strategy in an effort of enhancing nursing competency among nurses in Vietnam.

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