



FACTORS INFLUENCING NURSES PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES AT TERTIARY CARE HOSPITALS KARACHI

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: To determine the factors influencing nurses' participation in professional developmental activities at tertiary care hospital Karachi.

METHODOLOGY: Descriptive cross sectional study design was used. Setting: This study was carried out at public and private hospital which were Dr. K. M. Pfau Civil Hospital, and Kharadar General Hospital, Karachi, Pakistan. Nurses having valid PNC license like Staff nurses, Nursing Supervisors, Nursing Manager, and Nursing Director. Those who were not willing to participate were excluded. Sampling Technique: Convenient Sampling technique. Self-administered questionnaire was distributed. Sample size was 362.

RESULTS: Current study revealed that Personal and Job related factors have highest score (52%), then organizational factors (36%) which influencing nursing career development.

CONCLUSION: The study found that personal and job-related factors like workload, time limits, and low motivation most affect nurses' participation in professional development. Organizational barriers, such as poor support and lack of funding, also hinder growth. Hospitals should create supportive policies and establish Nursing Education Services Departments. Workload management, training opportunities, and government scholarships are essential for improvement. Making Continuous Professional Development (CPD) mandatory would enhance nursing competence and patient care quality.

KEYWORDS: Collaborative relationship, enhancing, competencies, promote, factors, professional developmental activities.

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Article received: Dec-10-2025

Revised: Feb-30-2026

Accepted: Mar-25-2026

INTRODUCTION: The primary aim of continuing professional development (CPD) in nursing is the improvement of patient care. CPD in nursing enables professional nurse practitioners to provide quality nursing care and service delivery to their clients. Professional nurses need to know that the expansion and the updating of their knowledge is crucial to the provision of quality patient care. According to Mackereth [1], every professional nurse should be aware of the need to update and expand his or her knowledge and skills. Fundamental to this is the commitment to assess his or her own learning needs, to search and find appropriate resources and to become self-directing in respect of his or her learning. The American Nurses Association, as cited by Kersaitis [2], believes it is the individual professional nurse's responsibility to identify and evaluate his or her own learning needs and to be accountable for ensuring that those needs are met. Failure on the part of the professional nurse to accept that the responsibility to learn continually is theirs, could result in the inadequate delivery of nursing care and the neglect of training opportunities. Although CPD for many nurses in the United Kingdom and in South Africa (SA) can be considered to be "post-basic" in the sense that it usually refers to those courses for which a basic nurse qualification is one of the prerequisites, some professional nurses in SA feel that CPD is of little value to them because they have years of experience in nursing and have perfected their knowledge and skills [3–5]. The reasons why professional nurses do not continue their learning may vary between the availability of learning opportunities, institutional policies and the attitude of the nurse towards his/her own learning. It is nevertheless important with the changing nature of the health of the South African population that nurses do take the responsibility to identify their learning needs and to ensure that these needs are met. According to the researcher, the problem in South Africa is that nurses are not aware of the fact that it is their responsibility to continue learning after obtaining a basic nursing qualification and to seek learning opportunities to address their learning needs.

Continuing education: According to Rogers [6], continuing education is purposeful planned learning, contrived to contribute to systematic growth and the effect of this is cumulative. Jarvis, as cited in Ferguson [7] and Barriball et al. [8], make a clear distinction between continuing learning and continuing education and summarise as follows:

In-service education: According to the University of Iowa [9], Harrington [10] and Popiel [11], in-service education is instructional or training programmes provided within the work setting, by the employing institution. It is designed to assist staff in acquiring,

maintaining, improving and increasing skills and knowledge relevant to fulfilling the requirements of the position for which the individual has been hired. In nursing, it is often referred to as on-the-job training or staff development and is provided for the improvement of nursing care and service through increased proficiency and knowledge.

Continuing professional development (CPD): has been defined as lifelong learning that takes place in a professional career after the point of qualification and or registration. It has also been defined as learning activities for developing and maintaining the capabilities to perform competently in the professional environment [12]. The European Lifelong Learning Initiative defines lifelong learning as "the development of human potential through continuously supporting processes which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments. The concept development is broader than education and includes a wide range of processes, such as learning, experience, reflection, observation and natural growth over time, whereas education refers to the formal, structured and systematic learning processes whereby individuals develop knowledge, skills, character and other abilities. Education also includes structured learning processes such as on-the-job and off-the job learning [13].

Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC) has launched a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program with the collaboration International Council of Nurses (ICN) and World Continue Educational Alliance (WCEA) UK. This is a tremendous online training opportunity will be available for all registered Nursing and Midwifery Professionals in Pakistan [14]. Nursing education in Pakistan has evolved over the last two decades, and it has shifted from three years traditional diploma program to degree program. The aim of this up gradation was to augment the standard of nursing education in Pakistan, and to produce knowledgeable and competent nurses. This up gradation was started after initiation of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) program in developed countries. Several institutes have started degree programs in recent years; however, resources in most of these institutes are not attuned with criteria of PNC and Higher Education Commission (HEC) [14].

Nursing education in Pakistan are facing challenges due to rapid and uncontrolled expansion of nursing institutes. Education offer underpinning for economic growth and development in the country; poor quality education inversely affect economic activities [14].

The nursing is a profession that provides 24-hour service to all persons. While providing these services, nurses encounter numerous situations that require them to make decisions. Professional training is the basic requirement for providing quality services to Patients, families and communities and for achieving this professional growth and development is very important [14].

Reasons for participating in continuing professional development activities

According to Eustace [6], Kersaitis [2], Merriam and Brockett [15], Barriball and while [8] and Mackereth [1], the reasons given by nurses for participating in CPD activities are as follows:

- Developing new professional knowledge and skills
- Keeping abreast of new developments in nursing practice and health
- Personal development
- Career development
- Escape or stimulation; and
- Acquisition of credentials

Barriers to participating in continuing professional development activities

According to Eustace [6], Kersaitis [2], Merriam and Brockett [15], Barriball and While [8], Nolan, Owen and Nolan [16], Nugent [3], Lindsay [17] and Mackereth [1], the reasons provided by nurses for not participating in CPD activities are as follows:

- Difficulty in obtaining study leave
- Shortage of staff
- Family and domestic responsibilities
- Living in rural areas
- Lack of financial support
- Lack of advance notification; and
- Programme not relevant to practice

The Aim of this research is to assess the need for continuing professional development for the professional nurse in order to develop criteria that would assist with the provision of the continuing professional development programmes.

Objectives:

- To assess whether professional nurses are aware of their responsibility to continue their education beyond their initial pre-service training
- To assess the extent to which professional nurses participate in continuing professional development activities
- To explore the motivating and hindering factors for participation in professional developmental activities

Rationale of the Study: The problem identified by the researcher, points to the fact that professional nurses are mostly not aware that it is their responsibility to continue learning and to seek learning opportunities in

order to address their learning needs after obtaining a basic nursing qualification. Nurses need to be up to date in their knowledge and competent in skills. Participation of nurses in professional development activities helps the nurse to bring evidence based best practice in patient care and be aware of recent advances in technologies in health care system [1–17].

Significance of the Study: The health care system faces multiples challenges in providing quality services to patients in which Nurses plays a very important role. So improve the professional growth will ultimately improve the quality of services. The finding of this study would identify and explore the motivating and hindering factors for participation in professional developmental activities and will provide strong recommendations for policy makers to develop SOPs for professional development activities [1–17].

Operational Definitions:

- Factors - A countable thing. A component is something that influences an occasion, choice, or circumstance.
- Nurse - A person who cares for the sick and has professional training and licensed from Pakistan Nursing Council.
- Development - Qualitative changes or Development is an essential component of a career in nursing to provide evidence-based care, optimizing patient care, enhancing work environments and retaining experienced nurses.
- Professional Development - Professional development is improving yourself through learning and training to advance your career.

METHODOLOGY: Descriptive cross sectional study will be conducted. The study will be carried out at Tertiary care hospitals Karachi. The duration of the complete study will be 06 months after the approval of synopsis. The target population will be male and female nurses. Convenient sampling will be applied and the sample size will be 362. The Inclusion criteria of this study will be Nursing Directors, Chief Nursing Superintendents Nurse Managers, Nursing Supervisors, Head Nurses, and Staff Nurses.

The exclusion criteria of this study will be those who will not willing to participate in research. Data will be collected through structure questionnaire and interview by visiting the selected hospitals in Karachi, Pakistan and formal permission will be taken through official correspondence.

Validity and Reliability of the tools will be checked through the IRB of the Kharadar General Hospital and a panel of three experts in nursing specialty will analyzed the content, validity of the tools before using it to ensure that all questions will consistently convey and carry the anticipated meaning that they prepared for.

The study tools will be applied on 10% of the total study sample to test the objectivity and applicability of the study tools and the feasibility of the research process as well as to estimate the time needed to answer them. The collected data will be coded, tabulated and analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). The data will be analyzed on SPSS licensed V-26 software. Percentages and Frequencies will be used to describe sociodemographic characteristics. The qualitative variables results will be shown by pie-chart and bar graph. The Mean, Median and Standard Deviation will be calculated for quantitative variables. The results will be shown by using Charts, Graphs and Frequency tables.

Ethical Consideration

- Ethical approval will be obtained from Research Ethics Committee of the - Kharadar General Hospital.
- Participants will be informed about the purpose of the Study and written informed consent will be taken.
- They will be also informed that each participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.
- Anonymity, privacy, safety and confidentiality will absolutely be assured throughout the study.

RESULTS: A total of 362 nurses from tertiary care hospitals in Karachi participated in this descriptive cross-sectional study. The demographic analysis revealed a majority of participants were female nurses (approximately 90%), predominantly aged between 25 and 35 years, and holding either a Diploma in Nursing or a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). Most of them had 1-10 years of professional experience, indicating a workforce in the early to mid-career stage. The age distribution of the participants (see Figure 2) indicates that the majority were between 25-35 years old, followed by those aged 36-45 years. Only a few participants were below 25 or above 45 years of age. This suggests that most respondents were in the early to mid-stages of their professional careers, actively involved in clinical work and skill development.

The study identified that personal and job-related factors had the greatest influence on nurses' participation in professional developmental activities, with a combined response rate of 52%. Within this category, the most significant personal barriers included:

- Lack of time due to busy work schedules and long shifts.
- Family responsibilities that limited participation in training outside duty hours.
- Low motivation or lack of perceived value in training programs.

Job-related factors included:

- High workload and staff shortages that reduced opportunities for participation.
- Limited replacement staff when nurses are away for professional activities.
- Irregular scheduling of training programs incompatible with clinical duties.

These results suggest that both personal obligations and workplace demands act as major deterrents to continuous professional development (CPD) participation

The results showed that organizational factors accounted for 36% of the total influence on participation in CPD. Key issues under this domain included:

- Lack of institutional support and inadequate encouragement from management.
- Insufficient funding or absence of scholarships for advanced education.
- Limited career advancement opportunities linked to professional development achievements.
- Poor planning and scheduling of developmental activities.
- Absence of a structured Nursing Education Services Department within the hospitals.

The findings indicate that while individual nurses express interest in CPD, institutional policies and management support play a crucial role in enabling consistent participation.

Comparison with Previous Studies: In the parent comparative study, job-related factors scored 71.2%, followed by personal factors (68.9%), and organizational factors (66.9%). These comparable figures support the current study's findings, reinforcing that while organizational support is vital, individual motivation and workload balance are the most immediate determinants of nurses' participation in professional development

FIGURE 1: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS

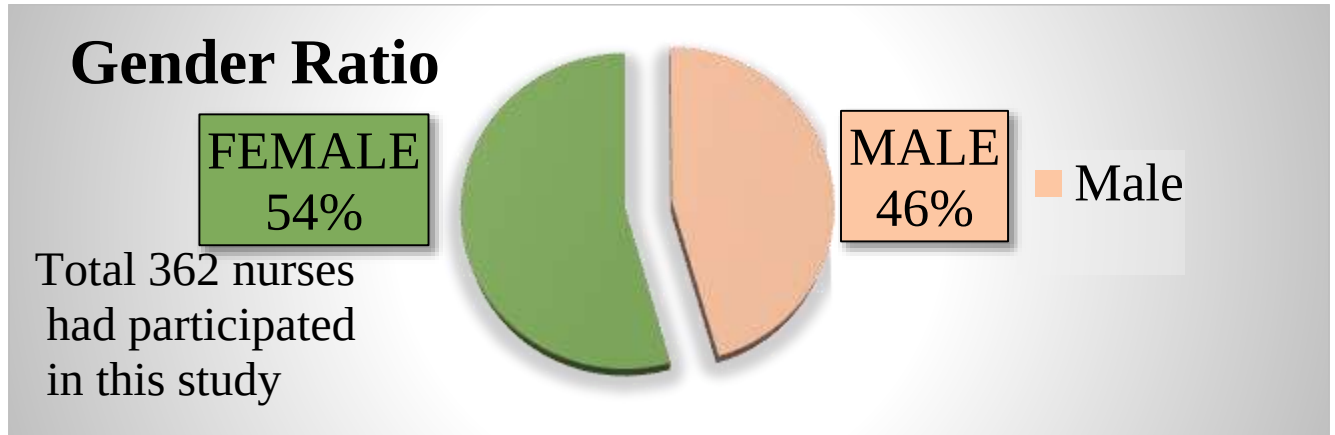


FIGURE 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS

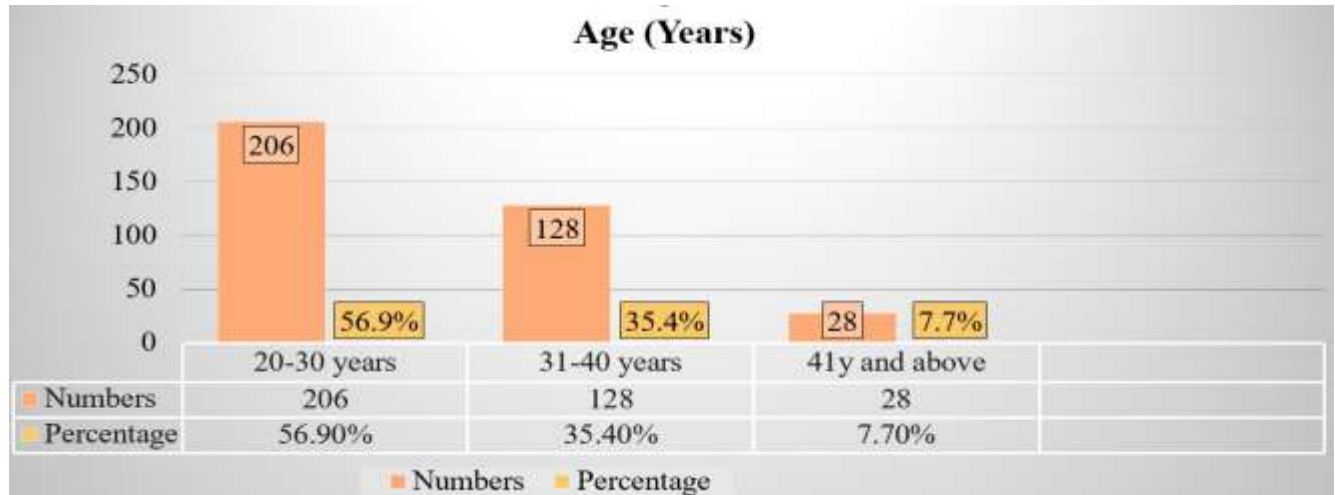


Table I: PERSONAL AND JOB-RELATED FACTORS

Personal and Job related factors	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
Do you have any adequate channel like NES department at your hospital?	53(16%)	309(84%)
After obtaining your basic qualification, have you studied and obtained an additional nursing or any other professional qualification?	233(64.4%)	129(35.6%)
If you are given the opportunity soon to attend a course and further your studies would you utilize the opportunity?	333(92%)	29(8%)
Have you attended any nursing workshops, conferences or seminars in the last two years?	122(35.1%)	240(64.9%)
Does your hospital offer an in-service education programs for nurses?	25(7.6%)	337(92.4%)
Do you think Continuous Professional Development participation should be compulsory for nurses?	315(87%)	42(13%)
Do you think that to receive a license to practice from the Pakistan Nursing Council, nurses should provide proof of their own CPD activities?	233(64.4%)	129(35.6%)
Mean Value	51.95%	48.04%

TABLE II: ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

Why did you attend a formal nursing course for professional developmental activities?	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
• To obtain additional qualification.	157(43.4%)	205(56.6%)
• To plan career pathway.	217(59.9%)	145(40.1%)
• To network and meet other nursing colleagues.	73(20.2%)	289(79.8%)
• Motivate to learn.	155(42.8%)	207(57.2%)
• To be knowledgeable about area of specialty.	141(39.0%)	221(61.0%)
• To improve confidence.	92(25.4%)	270(74.6%)
Mean Value	38.45%	61.55%

Why did you delay to study after the basic training?	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
• Lack of motivation to learn again.	97(26.8%)	265(73.2%)
• Not aware that I should acquire new knowledge.	80(22.1%)	282(77.9%)
• Do not cope well with academic studies.	51(14.1%)	311(85.9%)
• Family responsibilities.	209(57.7%)	153(42.3%)
• Financial and accommodation constraints.	167(46.1%)	195(53.9%)
• Unable to obtain study leave.	87(24.0%)	275(76.0%)
• Too old to learn.	29(8.0%)	333(92.0%)
Mean Value	31.14%	68.86%

How should the course be structured to enable you to further your studies?	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
• Full – time course.	67(18.5%)	295(81.5%)
• Part- time course with study days.	205(56.6%)	157(43.4%)
• Distant learning.	59(16.3%)	303(83.7%)
• Distant learning with learning packages and contact time.	102(28.2%)	260(71.8%)
• Workshops only.	105(29.0%)	257(71.0%)
Mean Value	29.73%	70.27%

The reasons that prevented you from attending a nursing professional developmental activities?	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
• Financial and accommodation constraints.	260(71.8%)	102(28.2%)
• Family responsibilities.	233(64.4%)	129(35.6%)
• Unable to obtain study leave.	83(22.9%)	279(77.1%)
• Topic not relevant to my learning needs.	51(14.1%)	311(85.9%)
• Lack of notification of the conference or workshop.	177(48.9%)	185(51.1%)
Mean Value	44.42%	55.58%

DISCUSSION: This study provides important insights into the multidimensional factors influencing nurses' participation in professional developmental activities at tertiary care hospitals in Karachi. The findings demonstrate that personal and job-related barriers remain the most significant obstacles to professional growth among nurses. The results highlight that nurses face multiple time-related and motivational challenges in engaging with CPD programs.

Similar to findings by Abele et al [13]. This study found that work overload, lack of rest time, and family obligations hinder nurses from pursuing developmental opportunities.

A key issue identified is shift work and staff shortages, which make it difficult for nurses to attend off-duty training sessions. Nurses often prioritize patient care over personal learning needs, reflecting a strong professional commitment but also revealing a systemic need for institutional flexibility.

The findings also suggest that nurses' perceived lack of recognition or incentives for attending professional programs further discourages participation. Motivation, both intrinsic (desire for growth) and extrinsic (promotion or salary benefits), plays a central role in influencing nurses' willingness to engage in lifelong learning.

The organizational environment profoundly affects professional development. Hospitals lacking structured education departments or budgetary allocations for staff training create systemic barriers. These findings emphasized that retention and career satisfaction are directly related to management's investment in CPD opportunities.

Another recurrent issue was the absence of study leave policies and deputation arrangements, which force nurses to choose between professional growth and job security. The lack of governmental scholarships for higher education also contributes to stagnation in nurses' academic advancement.

The study further revealed that communication gaps between management and nursing staff lead to unawareness about available training programs. Effective communication strategies and leadership involvement could therefore improve participation rates.

Compared with international literature, the results mirror global trends where workload, organizational culture, and lack of support are consistently cited as major hindrances to professional growth.

Applying this perspective to nursing suggests that mentorship programs and constructive feedback systems could motivate nurses to pursue CPD actively. The implications of this study extend to both institutional policy and nursing education frameworks. Hospitals should:

- Establish Nursing Education Services Departments (NESDs) to coordinate and promote professional activities.
- Integrate mandatory CPD participation into hospital policy and Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC) license renewal requirements.
- Ensure adequate staffing and workload management, enabling nurses to attend training without compromising patient care.

- Provide financial incentives, scholarships, and recognition programs for nurses completing advanced courses or certifications.
- Foster a culture of lifelong learning through leadership engagement, mentorship, and peer learning initiatives.

By adopting these recommendations, hospitals can enhance nurses' job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and ultimately improve patient outcomes through a better-skilled nursing workforce.

CONCLUSION: This study concludes that personal and job-related factors are the most significant influences on nurses' participation in professional developmental activities at tertiary care hospitals in Karachi. Time constraints, workload pressures, and limited motivation were key barriers. Organizational factors, while secondary, also played a substantial role particularly the lack of structured institutional support, financial assistance, and clear policies promoting continuing professional development.

The research underscores the urgent need for policy-level interventions to foster a supportive environment for professional growth. Institutions should:

- Implement research-based policies promoting employee development.
 - Manage workloads to allow adequate time for learning activities.
 - Establish Nursing Education Services Departments dedicated to planning and monitoring CPD programs.
 - Encourage the government and health authorities to provide scholarships and facilitate study leaves.
 - Introduce on-the-job and off-the-job training programs to maintain professional competency.
- Ultimately, continuous professional development (CPD) should be recognized not only as a personal obligation but as a strategic necessity for improving healthcare quality and patient safety. Making CPD participation compulsory for PNC registration renewal would ensure that nurses remain competent, confident, and motivated to deliver the highest standards of care.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest related to this study. The research was conducted independently, without any financial, personal, or institutional influence that could have affected the results or conclusions.

Ethical considerations: Ethical approval will be obtained from Research Ethics Committee of the - Kharadar General Hospital.

Source of Funding: The author received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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Authors Contribution

Sher Alam	<i>Concept and design</i>
Muhammad Aqib	<i>Acquisition of data</i>
Fawad Khan	<i>Data interpretation</i>
Cynthia Joseph	<i>Data analysis</i>
Iftikhar	<i>Concept of study</i>
Sana Latif	<i>Grammatical review</i>
Hanna Kalim	<i>Acquisition of data</i>