

NURSING PROTÉGÉ: Satisfaction and Perceptions of Student Nurses in a Tertiary Catholic University

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Abstract

Nursing school typically consists of several exhausting lectures that demand in-depth comprehension and interpretation. Having Nursing protégé programs enables experienced senior students and their junior counterparts a structured framework for sharing knowledge, abilities, and support. This study aims to investigate the satisfaction and perceptions of student nurses in a tertiary Catholic university regarding their experiences as nursing protégés. A mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative surveys was used. Purposive sampling recruited 164 student nurses from a tertiary Catholic institution's Nursing Protégé Program. A researcher-made questionnaire collected their responses. Quantitative data was analyzed for satisfaction levels using frequency and percentage distribution. Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data. The numerical results showed that participants were satisfied with the program. Thematic analysis reveals that participants gain skills and competencies, interpersonal engagement, attainable assistance, synergistic collaboration, and personality development as benefits, while time constraints, non-conducive environmental milieu, and passive group members act as barriers. Direct interpersonal engagement and creative recreational activities are suggested as additional activities for the participants. Students' satisfaction with peer mentoring varies significantly based on their year level. This suggests that individual needs and expectations, along with factors like the mentoring relationship, communication skills, and compatibility with peers, influence their level of satisfaction. Future researchers may explore the development of a customary framework for the Nursing Protégé Program as a peer mentoring mechanism, which may be applicable in academe and clinical practice. The study has important implications for nursing education and practice stakeholders. Educators can improve the nursing protégé program based on the findings, while student nurses can benefit from mentorship opportunities. Future research can focus on mentor-mentee dynamics and program outcomes in nursing protégé programs.

Keywords – mentoring, protégé, perceptions, satisfaction, student nurse

INTRODUCTION

Academic difficulty is not a new word for students worldwide. It evolves as a result of a variety of factors brought on by changes in time, curriculum, economic situation, etc. Today, the ongoing pandemic reshaped the lives of students globally, because the traditional method of learning that is known to be effective was set aside in favor of more contemporary and flexible online distance learning. According to Dewart et al. (2020), 40 percent of 2000 university students in the United States reported finding it difficult to attend classes, and more than half (52%) said, students face challenges to complete their academic tasks.

Nursing classes can involve a variety of tiresome lectures that call for in-depth understanding and interpretation from one lesson to the next. In contrast to other courses that performed well during the pandemic, medical courses, particularly nursing, struggled more than expected. This is because nursing requires experience in practical situations (Dewart et al., 2020).

Throughout the students' studies and training, student nurses are subjected to a variety of stressors. They have busy schedules along with lectures, labs, assignments, and projects. As a result, they are expected to do a lot of reading than usual, independent case studies, and presentations during their school day. Being alone with a student peer fosters learning, and a strong relationship is important to a Nursing Protégé, there is a strong need to pay attention to one another, be patient with each other's differences, and learn from one another (Lovrić et al., 2020).

In the province of Pampanga, there is a tertiary catholic university that offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. Within this academic institution, a peer mentoring program has been implemented consistently on an annual basis. The college's nursing mentorship program is essential to helping nursing protégés advance their careers. A mentorship program is created to transfer knowledge and offer advice from seasoned nurses to new practitioners. Although this program has been put in place, there is a considerable research gap when it comes to the evaluation of the nursing mentorship program since it was first established.

Statement of the Problem

The main objective of this research is to determine the perception regarding the benefits and challenges they face, their satisfaction with the program, and the overall learning experience of student nurses in the nursing protégé program in a tertiary Catholic institution. Also, the researchers sought to answer the following:

1. How may the socio-demographic profile of student nurses in terms of:
 - a. Age,
 - b. Sex,
 - c. Year Level, and
 - d. General Weighted Average of 2nd Semester (A.Y. 2021-2022)?

2. How may the satisfaction of student nurses regarding the nursing protégé program be determined in terms of:
 - a. Initiation or Orientation Stage,
 - b. Dependence or Nurturing Stage,
 - c. Independence or Autonomy Stage,
 - d. Termination or Divorce Stage, and
 - e. Overall satisfaction?

3. What is the difference in the overall satisfaction of the student nurses across their socio-demographic characteristics?
4. What are the perceived benefits of the nursing protégé program?
5. What are the identified barriers or challenges in the nursing protégé program?
6. What are the activities needed for the nursing protégé program?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student-to-student mentoring is not new today, mentees reported having less trouble transitioning and higher overall satisfaction with the peer mentoring. This is because student mentors offered advice on a variety of topics, such as which professors excelled at both teaching and advising, as well as where to dwell. Students are free to engage in those conversations whereas faculty are not permitted to say such things Munsey (n.d.).

The protégé aims to help nursing students become independent, self-assured, and efficient learners who complete all academic nursing program requirements. Initial tutee evaluations of tutoring sessions indicate that peer tutoring as an adjunctive teaching and learning strategy can improve academic performance. Improved student quantitative measures, such as higher exam scores and GPAs, were found, as were qualitative outcomes indicating increased critical thinking skills, self-direction, and self-confidence. Nurse educators and student tutors gained valuable teaching experience, which aided in the development of their overall academic roles (Kachaturoff et al., 2020). According to Yüksel and Bahadır-Yilmaz (2019), mentoring programs increase student satisfaction, develop social skills and effective communication, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve cognitive, psychomotor, and academic performance.

E-mentoring has become popular today. Despite its popularity, little is known about the effectiveness of e-mentoring for young people, particularly in the context of health-focused mentoring (Kaufman et al., 2021). The group discussion method was rated as a good approach due to its emphasis on student participation, effective learning, and promotion of creativity (Sajjad, 2010).

Mentoring Life Cycle (Hay, 1995)

The mentoring life cycle is a framework for understanding the different stages of a mentoring relationship comprising four definable stages which can be defined as follows: Stage 1 is the initiation, orientation, and the courtship stage. Stage 2 defines the establishment, adolescence, dependency, nurturing, or honeymoon stage. Stage 3 focuses on maturing, and developing independence or autonomy. Lastly, Stage 4 is where ending, termination or divorce will happen.

Stage 1: Initiation or Orientation Stage

The orientation stage is all about allying, it consists of preparing for the relationship and creating a bond and a contract. This uses different terminologies suggesting that it is all about establishing rapport and trust (forming the bond), terms of reference, and setting objectives (contracting).

Stage 2: Dependency or Nurturing Stage

This stage entails assisting the mentee with telling their story or narrative. In other words, they should assess their situation, and describe it, how they arrived there, and where they could consider going in the future.

Stage 3: Independence or Autonomy Stage

In the Autonomy Stage, the mentor encourages the mentee to consider the merits of various options, choose the best option, and devise a detailed plan of action.

Stage 4: Termination or Divorce Stage

In the last stage, the mentoring relationship will either end at a premature end or terminate naturally. This needs to be carefully planned so that the reliance and the habit of the bond can be wound down eventually and to avoid the relationship just ceasing.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers utilized a convergent mixed-method design in their study. In this design, the researchers collected both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time, analyzed them separately, and then merged the results to generate a more complete understanding of the research question.

Sources of Data

The primary data were sourced from participants who had completed the mentoring cycle of the Nursing Protégé Program last academic year (2021-2022).

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected using a combination of online and in-person methods. Online data collection was conducted using Google Forms, with participants receiving the form link via a messenger app. Additionally, face-to-face data collection took place, where

participants were provided with a questionnaire containing Likert Scale questions for the quantitative portion and open-ended questions for the qualitative portion.

Respondents and Locale

The researchers selected 164 student nurses from year levels II, III, & IV, who were able to experience the nursing protégé or group mentoring activity last academic year 2021-2022 in the University of the Assumption, College of Nursing and Pharmacy. Year levels correspond to the years in the educational ladder of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing in the Philippines.

Research Instrument

The data-gathering process was conducted using a researcher-made survey questionnaire. The instrument underwent a Content Validation Index (CVI) process, wherein three experts—a psychometrician, a language expert, and a health program officer with expertise in capacity development—evaluated its content. To test its reliability, a pilot test was conducted by the researchers, involving 30 Bachelor of Science in Accountancy students who also went in peer mentoring during the previous academic year (2021-2022). The collected data from the pilot test were then analyzed by a statistician to assess the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha. The results indicated excellent internal consistency for the constructs of satisfaction in the orientation stage ($\alpha=0.9191$), nurturing stage ($\alpha=0.9438$), divorce stage ($\alpha=0.9035$), and overall satisfaction ($\alpha=0.9549$). Additionally, the satisfaction in the autonomy stage exhibited good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.8862.

Sampling Technique

The selection of participants was done through non-probability sampling such as purposive sampling; it is a sampling technique used in qualitative research that involves selecting participants based on specific characteristics or qualities that are relevant to the research question. Researchers selected student nurses who completed the whole session of the nursing protégé program last academic year 2021-2022.

Ethical Clearance

The study was cleared under the conditions of approval by the Chairperson of the University of the Assumption Research Ethics Board.

Statistical treatment

The data were encoded and checked for completeness using Microsoft Excel. A non-parametric test was utilized since the outcome variable or data such as satisfaction, is

measured through the Likert Scale which is an ordinal or ranked data. Kruskal Wallis Test was utilized in determining the significant differences of (a) age, (b) year level, and (c) GWA since they have three or more categories. Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test was utilized by the researchers in determining the significant differences of (a) sex because it only contains two categories.

Additionally, Post Hoc Test (Dunn’s Pairwise Comparison Test) was used to determine which group/categories have a significant difference from one another. To make sense of the outcomes related to the fourth, fifth, and sixth research objectives, thematic analysis was utilized in this study.

RESULTS

Sociodemographic Profile

A total of 164 students participated in the study, with 120 (73.17%) females and 44 (26.83%) males. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The majority were 20 years old (42.07%), followed by 21 years old (34.15%), 22 years old (10.98%), 19 years old (8.54%), and 23 years old and above (4.27%). More than half (50.61%) were in Level III, while others were in Level II (40.24%), and Level IV (9.15%). In terms of their General Weighted Average (GWA) last Academic Year 2021-2022, most of the students got 83 - 89% (65.85%), while 25.61% of the students got 90 – 100%, and 8.54% got 75-82%.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

| Demographic characteristics | Frequenc y | Percentag e |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Age (in years) | | |
| 19 | 14 | 8.54 |
| 20 | 69 | 42.07 |
| 21 | 56 | 34.15 |
| 22 | 18 | 10.98 |
| Above 22 | 7 | 4.27 |
| Sex | | |
| Male | 44 | 26.83 |
| Female | 120 | 73.17 |
| Year Level | | |
| Level II | 66 | 40.24 |
| Level III | 83 | 50.61 |
| Level IV | 15 | 9.15 |
| GWA last AY 2021-2022 | | |
| 90% - 100% | 42 | 25.61 |
| 83% - 89% | 108 | 65.85 |
| 75% - 82% | 14 | 8.54 |

Initiation or Orientation Stage

As reflected in Table 2, most of the students were satisfied with the rapport established in their group (42.68%), with the introductions done (40.24%), type of communication they use (42.07%), language being used to communicate (49.49%), social atmosphere in their group (37.80%), ground rules they set in their group (39.63%), in the quality of their instructions (45.12%), and frequency of their group meetings (37.20%). The item with the highest percentage of students being very satisfied is the language being used for communication (35.98%). The median satisfaction score on all statements under the initiation stage is 4, which is equivalent to "satisfied". The mean score in the orientation stage is 3.82, which is also equivalent to being satisfied.

Table 2. Satisfaction of student nurses regarding the nursing protégé under the initiation or orientation stage

| STATEMENTS | Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neutral | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Median |
|---|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| I am satisfied with the... | | | | | | |
| established rapport with my group. | 4 (2.44%) | 8 (4.88%) | 48 (29.27%) | 70 (42.68%) | 34 (20.73%) | 4 |
| introductions done by my groupmates. | 3 (1.83%) | 11 (6.71%) | 43 (26.22%) | 66 (40.24%) | 41 (25.00%) | 4 |
| type of communication used by my group. | 2 (1.22%) | 15 (9.15%) | 44 (26.83%) | 69 (42.07%) | 34 (20.73%) | 4 |
| the language used by my group. | 2 (1.22%) | 2 (1.22%) | 20 (12.20%) | 81 (49.39%) | 59 (35.98%) | 4 |
| the social atmosphere within my group. | 2 (1.22%) | 10 (6.10%) | 60 (36.59%) | 62 (37.80%) | 30 (18.29%) | 4 |
| ground rules set by my group. | 2 (1.22%) | 5 (3.05%) | 52 (31.71%) | 65 (39.63%) | 40 (24.39%) | 4 |
| quality of the overall instructions. | 1 (0.61%) | 4 (2.44%) | 47 (28.66%) | 74 (45.12%) | 38 (23.17%) | 4 |
| agreed frequency of group meetings. | 2 (1.22%) | 16 (9.76%) | 44 (26.83%) | 61 (37.20%) | 41 (25.00%) | 4 |
| Orientation Stage Mean | | | | | | 3.82 |

Dependence or Nurturing Stage

Table 3 reflects that more than half were satisfied with the learned essential concepts of the activity (54.27%). Moreover, the majority were satisfied with the guidance and support of their mentors (46.95%), the objectives set by their group (45.12%), shared responsibilities (41.46%), the opportunity to learn new skills (42.07%), learned strategies (46.95%), facilitator's ability to discuss effectively (46.34%), and teaching modalities being used by the facilitators (48.17%). The statement with the highest percentage of students that were very satisfied is the opportunity to learn a new skill (34.76%). The median score of all statements under the dependence stage is 4, equivalent to being satisfied. The mean score of the stage is 3.89, which is interpreted as satisfied.

Table 3. Satisfaction of student nurses regarding the nursing protégé under the dependence or nurturing stage

| STATEMENTS | Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neutral | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Median |
|---|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| I am satisfied with the... | | | | | | |
| guidance and support of my mentors. | 4 (2.44%) | 7 (4.27%) | 29 (17.68%) | 77 (46.95%) | 47 (28.66%) | 4 |
| objectives/goals set by my group. | 3 (1.83%) | 12 (7.32%) | 38 (23.17%) | 74 (45.12%) | 37 (22.56%) | 4 |
| shared responsibilities of each member. | 4 (2.44%) | 13 (7.93%) | 39 (23.78%) | 68 (41.46%) | 40 (24.39%) | 4 |
| opportunity to learn new skills. | 1 (0.61%) | 9 (5.49%) | 28 (17.07%) | 69 (42.07%) | 57 (34.76%) | 4 |
| learned essential concepts of the activity. | 3 (1.83%) | 8 (4.88%) | 23 (14.02%) | 89 (54.27%) | 41 (25.00%) | 4 |
| learned strategies in performing an activity. | 3 (1.83%) | 7 (4.27%) | 35 (21.34%) | 77 (46.95%) | 42 (25.61%) | 4 |
| facilitator's ability to effectively discuss content matters. | 2 (1.22%) | 9 (5.49%) | 41 (25.00%) | 76 (46.34%) | 36 (21.95%) | 4 |
| teaching modalities used by my facilitators | 2 (1.22%) | 10 (6.10%) | 36 (21.95%) | 79 (48.17%) | 37 (22.56%) | 4 |
| Nurturing Stage mean | | | | | | 3.89 |

Independence or Autonomy Stage

As shown in Table 4, more than half of the respondents were satisfied with their ability to think critically and independently (59.15%), ability to utilize the knowledge they gained (58.54%), ability to perform independently using their skills (56.71%), ability to choose strategies and ways to understand nursing concepts (53.05%), and the improvement they had before undergoing the mentoring program (52.44%). Moreover, 24.39% were very satisfied with the improvement they had. The median answer under the autonomy stage is 4, which means being satisfied. Moreover, the mean score for the independence or autonomy stage is 3.97, which is equivalent to satisfied, and the highest mean among the stages assessed.

Table 4. Satisfaction of student nurses regarding the nursing protégé under the independence or autonomy stage

| STATEMENTS | Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neutral | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Median |
|--|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| I am satisfied with my... | | | | | | |
| ability to think critically and independently | 1 (0.61%) | 2 (1.22%) | 30 (18.29%) | 97 (59.15%) | 34 (20.73%) | 4 |
| ability to utilize nursing knowledge independently. | 0 (0.00%) | 4 (2.44%) | 32 (19.51%) | 96 (58.54%) | 32 (19.51%) | 4 |
| ability to perform nursing skills independently | 0 (0.00%) | 2 (1.22%) | 32 (19.51%) | 93 (56.71%) | 37 (22.56%) | 4 |
| improvement today in comparison to before I undergo peer mentoring activities. | 1 (0.61%) | 4 (2.44%) | 33 (20.12%) | 86 (52.44%) | 40 (24.39%) | 4 |
| ability to choose strategies and ways for me to easily understand nursing concepts | 1 (0.61%) | 2 (1.22%) | 39 (23.78%) | 87 (53.05%) | 35 (21.34%) | 4 |
| Autonomy Stage mean | | | | | | 3.97 |

Termination or Divorce

In Table 5, more than 50% of the students were satisfied with the outcome of the program as the ability to perform a nursing task was observed. The majority were also

satisfied with the progress and accomplishments of the mentoring (45.73%), the relationship they had with their group (40.85%), how their group met their goals (43.90%), and the feedback they received on their development (48.78%). The median of the statements under the termination stage was also 4, equivalent to being satisfied. The mean termination score is 3.75, which also means satisfied.

Table 5. Satisfaction of student nurses regarding the nursing protégé under the termination or divorce stage

| STATEMENTS | Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neutral | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Median |
|---|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| I am satisfied... | | | | | | |
| with the progress and accomplishments of the mentoring relationship. | 2 (1.22%) | 12 (7.32%) | 43 (26.22%) | 75 (45.73%) | 32 (19.51%) | 4 |
| with the relationship I had with my group. | 2 (1.22%) | 20 (12.20%) | 42 (25.61%) | 67 (40.85%) | 33 (20.12%) | 4 |
| on how my group met all the set targets/goals. | 4 (2.44%) | 12 (7.32%) | 42 (25.61%) | 72 (43.90%) | 34 (20.73%) | 4 |
| with the outcome of peer mentoring activity as evidenced by my ability to perform a nursing task. | 4 (2.44%) | 6 (3.66%) | 41 (25.00%) | 84 (51.22%) | 29 (17.68%) | 4 |
| with the feedback I received about my development. | 0 (0.00%) | 12 (7.32%) | 39 (23.78%) | 80 (48.78%) | 33 (20.12%) | 4 |
| Termination Stage mean | | | | | | 3.75 |

Overall Satisfaction

Table 6 posits that more than half were satisfied with the skills they have developed that can be applied to their family and patients (54.27%), and with the nursing concepts introduced (51.83%). Moreover, most of the students were satisfied with the overall nursing protégé program (42.68%), with the newly developed skills and insights (48.17%), the overall quality of group discussions (43.29%), the type of help they wanted and received in the program (43.90%, 48.17%, respectively), extent to which the program met their needs (40.24%), and with the content (46.34%), and format (48.17%) of group discussions. They were also satisfied with the peer mentoring and found it to be valuable (46.95%). On the other hand, most of the students were neutral in the peer mentoring exceeding their

expectations (36.59%). The median in terms of overall satisfaction is 4, which is interpreted as satisfied. The mean overall score is 3.75, which also means being satisfied with the program.

Table 6. Overall satisfaction of student nurses regarding the nursing protégé program of the University of the Assumption, College of Nursing and Pharmacy.

| STATEMENTS | Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neutral | Satisfied | Very satisfied | Median |
|--|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| I am satisfied with the overall nursing protege program of the University of the Assumption. | 0 (0.00%) | 9 (5.49%) | 44 (26.83%) | 70 (42.68%) | 41 (25.00%) | 4 |
| I found the peer mentoring activity to be extremely valuable and satisfying. | 0 (0.00%) | 12 (7.32%) | 39 (23.78%) | 77 (46.95%) | 36 (21.95%) | 4 |
| I am satisfied with the newly developed skills and insights gained from the activity. | 0 (0.00%) | 10 (6.10%) | 36 (21.95%) | 79 (48.17%) | 39 (23.78%) | 4 |
| The peer mentoring activity exceeded my expectations. | 5 (3.05%) | 16 (9.76%) | 62 (37.80%) | 60 (36.59%) | 21 (12.80%) | 3 |
| I am satisfied with the overall quality of the group discussions. | 2 (1.22%) | 11 (6.71%) | 52 (31.71%) | 71 (43.29%) | 28 (17.07%) | 4 |
| I am satisfied with the type of help I wanted from the nursing protégé program. | 3 (1.83%) | 9 (5.49%) | 51 (31.10%) | 72 (43.90%) | 29 (17.68%) | 4 |
| I am satisfied with the extent to which the program met my needs. | 3 (1.83%) | 9 (5.49%) | 58 (35.37%) | 66 (40.24%) | 28 (17.07%) | 4 |
| I am satisfied with the amount of help I received. | 3 (1.83%) | 11 (6.71%) | 42 (25.61%) | 79 (48.17%) | 29 (17.68%) | 4 |
| I am satisfied with the nursing concepts introduced. | 3 (1.83%) | 6 (3.66%) | 39 (23.78%) | 85 (51.83%) | 31 (18.90%) | 4 |
| I am satisfied with the content of all the group discussions. | 2 (1.22%) | 9 (5.49%) | 47 (28.66%) | 76 (46.34%) | 30 (18.29%) | 4 |
| I am satisfied with the format of all group discussions. | 1 (0.61%) | 9 (5.49%) | 43 (26.22%) | 79 (48.17%) | 32 (19.51%) | 4 |
| I am satisfied with the developed skills that can be applied to my family/patients. | 3 (1.83%) | 7 (4.27%) | 35 (21.34%) | 89 (54.27%) | 30 (18.29%) | 4 |
| Overall mean | | | | | | 3.75 |

Difference in the overall satisfaction of the student nurses across their socio-demographic profiles

In Table 7, there is no significant difference in the student's satisfaction with the program across ages (all p-values > 0.05). In terms of sex, there is a significant difference in their satisfaction in terms of exceeding their expectations ($p=0.0428$), the type of help they wanted ($p=0.0204$), and the extent to which the program met my needs ($p=0.0090$). When compared across year levels, there is a significant difference in the peer mentoring activity exceeding their expectations ($p=0.0097$), overall quality of the discussions ($p=0.0057$), the extent to which the program met their needs ($p=0.0492$), with the nursing concepts being introduced ($p=0.0065$), and content of all group discussions ($p=0.0483$). Moreover, there is a significant difference across year levels on the overall mean score ($p=0.0396$). On the comparison across GWA, no significant differences were found (all p-values > 0.05).

To determine which groups, differ in terms of peer mentoring exceeding expectations, Dunn's Pairwise Comparison Test was utilized. In the results in Table 8, it was found that there is a difference in the satisfaction of the students in Level II and Level III ($p=0.0219$), and Level III and Level IV ($p=0.0049$). In both comparisons, Level III has higher satisfaction compared to the other groups.

Table 9 shows the difference in satisfaction with the quality of group discussions. There is a difference among the Level II and Level III students ($p=0.0122$), and Level III and Level IV students ($p=0.0025$). In terms of the difference, Level III students have higher satisfaction compared with Level II and Level IV students.

The pairwise comparison of the difference in satisfaction on the extent to which the program met their needs is shown in Table 10. Similar to the other pairwise comparisons, there is a significant difference across Level II and Level III students ($p=0.0346$), and across Level III and Level IV students ($p=0.0194$). In both comparisons, Level III students have higher satisfaction compared with the other levels.

Table 11 presents Dunn's pairwise comparison across levels of satisfaction with the nursing concepts introduced. There is a significant difference among Level II and Level III student nurses ($p=0.0095$), as well as Level III and Level IV student nurses ($p=0.0037$). In these comparisons, Level III students have higher satisfaction.

The year levels were also compared in terms of their satisfaction with the content of the group discussions as shown in Table 12. There is a significant difference among the students in Level III and Level IV ($p=0.0091$). Those in Level III have higher satisfaction compared with those in Level IV.

Table 7. Difference in the overall satisfaction of the student nurses across their socio-demographic profiles

| STATEMENTS | AGE | SEX | YEAR LEVEL | GWA |
|--|--------|---------|------------|--------|
| I am satisfied with the overall nursing protege program of the University of the Assumption. | 0.2032 | 0.7994 | 0.1542 | 0.5416 |
| I found the peer mentoring activity to be extremely valuable and satisfying. | 0.9718 | 0.7809 | 0.4762 | 0.6577 |
| I am satisfied with the newly developed skills and insights gained from the activity. | 0.5300 | 0.9570 | 0.5639 | 0.3045 |
| The peer mentoring activity exceeded my expectations. | 0.4752 | 0.0428* | 0.0097* | 0.7504 |
| I am satisfied with the overall quality of the group discussions. | 0.2336 | 0.1060 | 0.0057* | 0.8422 |
| I am satisfied with the type of help I wanted from the nursing protégé program. | 0.8604 | 0.0204* | 0.0908 | 0.5511 |
| I am satisfied with the extent to which the program met my needs. | 0.7768 | 0.0090* | 0.0492* | 0.6833 |
| I am satisfied with the amount of help I received. | 0.5488 | 0.3091 | 0.1283 | 0.1970 |
| I am satisfied with the nursing concepts introduced. | 0.8738 | 0.2486 | 0.0065* | 0.5370 |
| I am satisfied with the content of all the group discussions. | 0.3444 | 0.0811 | 0.0483* | 0.5963 |
| I am satisfied with the format of all group discussions. | 0.7597 | 0.1104 | 0.1212 | 0.6914 |
| I am satisfied with the developed skills that can be applied to my family/patients. | 0.9772 | 0.3276 | 0.0826 | 0.4773 |
| Overall mean | 0.5029 | 0.1095 | 0.0396* | 0.6691 |

*significant at 0.05

Table 8. Dunn's Test on Peer Mentoring Activity Exceeding Expectations

| | Level II | Level III |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Level III | diff=2.23 p=0.0129* | |
| Level IV | diff=-1.25 p=0.1063 | diff=-2.58 p=0.0049* |

Diff=row-col mean; *significant at 0.05

Table 9. Dunn's Test on the overall quality of the group discussions

| | Level II | Level III |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Level III | diff=2.25 p=0.0122* | |
| Level IV | diff=-1.45 p=0.0733 | diff=-2.80 p=0.0025* |

Diff=row-col mean; *significant at 0.05

Table 10. Dunn's Test on the extent to which the program met their needs

| | Level II | Level III |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Level III | diff=1.18 p=0.0346* | |
| Level IV | diff=-0.98 p=0.1641 | diff=-2.07 p=0.0194* |

Diff=row-col mean; *significant at 0.05

Table 11. Dunn's Test on nursing concepts introduced

| | Level II | Level III |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Level III | diff=2.35 p=0.0095* | |
| Level IV | diff=-1.27 p=0.1020 | diff=-2.67 p=0.0037* |

Diff=row-col mean; *significant at 0.05

Table 12. Dunn's Test on the content of all group discussions

| | Level II | Level III |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Level III | diff=1.28 p=0.0995 | |
| Level IV | diff=-1.58 p=0.0575 | diff=-2.36 p=0.0091* |

Diff=row-col mean; *significant at 0.05

The overall score on satisfaction of the students was also compared across year levels. Results in Table 13 show that there is a significant difference across Level II and Level III ($p=0.0476$), and across Level III and Level IV students ($p=0.0111$). In both comparisons, Level III students have higher satisfaction scores compared with those in Level IV.

Table 13. Dunn's Test on the overall score

| | Level II | Level III |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Level III | diff=1.67 p=0.0476* | |
| Level IV | diff=-1.28 p=0.1003 | diff=-2.29 p=0.0111* |

Diff=row-col mean; *significant at 0.05

Perceived Benefits of the Nursing Protégé Program

Five main themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the fourth objective: (1) Gaining Competencies and proficiencies, (2) Interpersonal Engagement, (3) Attainable Assistance, (4) Synergistic Collaboration, and (5) Personality Development. Each theme encompasses related subthemes that provide deeper insights of participants regarding the perceived benefits of the peer mentoring activity of the college as reflected in Table 14.

Identified Barriers/Challenges of the Nursing Protégé Program

Table 15 shows that three main themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the fifth objective: (1) Time Conflicts, (2) Non-conducive Environmental Milieu, and (3) Passive Group Members. Each theme encompasses related subthemes that provide deeper insights of participants regarding the challenges or barriers of the peer mentoring activity of the college.

Activities Needed for the Nursing Protégé Program

As reflected in Table 16, two main themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the fifth objective: (1) Direct Interpersonal Engagement, and (2) Innovative Recreational Activities. Each theme encompasses related subthemes that provide deeper insights of participants regarding the additional activities needed for the peer mentoring activity of the college.

Table 14. Perceived Benefits of the Nursing Protégé Program (cont.)

| THEMES | SUB-THEMES | VERBATIM CODED RESPONSES | DESCRIPTION |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| ATTAINABLE ASSISTANCE | Help Guidance | <p><i>... help you get to your group mentor; they will help you with your concern...</i></p> <p><i>... benefit of having peer mentoring is that they will always stay by your side and help you with your queries/concerns...</i></p> <p><i>... guidance among each other; support and sharing strategies...</i></p> <p><i>... For guidance...</i></p> <p><i>... Guidance...</i></p> | <p>Participants identified assistance attainable as one benefit of the peer mentoring activity. It provides a supportive space for proteges to seek guidance, gain practical knowledge, and develop their professional skills. This suggests that mentees can navigate the challenges of their education with increased confidence, ultimately contributing to their growth and success as student nurses.</p> <p>There are 26 coded responses related to attainable assistance.</p> |
| SYNERGISTIC COLLABORATION | Teamwork & Collaboration Establishing Cooperation | <p><i>... enhance our teamwork...</i></p> <p><i>... boost my collaboration skills...</i></p> <p><i>... being cooperative allows me to work together with the group...</i></p> <p><i>... practice in working and cooperating with other people...</i></p> | <p>Participants in a peer mentoring program highlighted the value of synergistic collaboration as a key benefit. Synergistic collaboration refers to the dynamic and mutually beneficial interaction that occurs when individuals work together towards a common goal, combining their unique skills, knowledge, and perspectives.</p> <p>There are 8 coded responses related to synergistic collaboration.</p> |
| PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT | Boost Self-confidence | <p><i>... it helps us to improve and become more confident in our degree...</i></p> <p><i>... Enhance the confidence of the student nurses...</i></p> | <p>Some participants in the peer mentoring program highlighted the benefits of personality development. This aspect of the program focuses on the growth and enhancement of an individual's traits that contribute to their overall personality. By actively engaging in mentoring relationships, participants can develop their self-awareness, and self-confidence, and ultimately cultivate a more well-rounded and mature personality.</p> <p>There are 5 coded responses related to personality development.</p> |

Table 15. Identified Barriers/Challenges of the Nursing Protégé Program

| THEMES | SUB-THEMES | VERBATIM CODED RESPONSES | DESCRIPTION |
|--|--|---|---|
| TIME CONFLICTS | Time Constraints Schedule Conflicts | <p><i>... not have enough time...</i></p> <p><i>... lack of time...</i></p> <p><i>... schedules do not match with each other as we have different schedules...</i></p> <p><i>... unmatching schedules...</i></p> | <p>Participants in a peer mentoring program often encounter contrasting time sequences, which present barriers or challenges to the program. These challenges primarily involve time constraints and schedule conflicts. This constraint makes it difficult for mentors and mentees to find mutually convenient times for meetings and interactions, hindering the progress of the mentoring relationship.</p> <p>There are 98 coded responses related to time conflicts.</p> |
| NON-CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL MILIEU | Online/Virtual Meeting Lack of Physical Interaction Internet Connection Problems | <p><i>... protege is being administered online...</i></p> <p><i>... I see that it is done online...</i></p> <p><i>... lack of physical contact and interaction...</i></p> <p><i>... no formal or face-to-face meetings...</i></p> <p><i>... loss of internet connection while having a conversation or meeting at a conference...</i></p> <p><i>... poor internet connection when meeting online...</i></p> | <p>Participants identified the barriers or challenges of a peer mentoring program as being related to the incompatible milieu of online meetings compared to face-to-face meetings. They expressed concerns about the limitations and difficulties that arise when conducting mentoring sessions virtually. Online meetings may lack the same level of personal connection and non-verbal communication that can be present in face-to-face interactions.</p> <p>There are 35 coded responses related to the non-conductive environmental milieu.</p> |
| PASSIVE GROUP MEMBERS | Not Participative or Cooperative Unresponsiveness | <p><i>... Others are not participating in the activities...</i></p> <p><i>... There are group mates who were uncooperative and hard to reach out last semester...</i></p> <p><i>... others are not responding...</i></p> <p><i>... unresponsiveness of the group members...</i></p> | <p>Participants in a peer mentoring program refer to individuals who actively engage in the program's activities and contribute to its overall goals. These participants typically include both mentors and mentees, each playing a vital role in the mentoring relationship.</p> <p>There are 27 coded responses related to passive group members.</p> |

Table 16. Activities Needed for the Nursing Protégé Program

| THEMES | SUB-THEMES | VERBATIM CODED RESPONSES | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|--|---|
| DIRECT INTERPERSONAL ENGAGEMENT | In-Person Interaction | <p><i>... Better to conduct this face-to-face...</i></p> <p><i>... It would be much better and easier if this activity would be held face to face...</i></p> <p><i>... face to face protege presentation and discussion...</i></p> <p><i>... Face to face peer mentoring would be more effective...</i></p> <p><i>... More chances of FtF interaction...</i></p> | <p>The participants overwhelmingly expressed that the missing element in their peer mentoring program was direct interpersonal engagement or face-to-face interaction. They emphasized the importance of personal connections and the value they bring to the mentoring process. According to their feedback, they believe that being physically present with their peers would enhance the effectiveness of the program and provide a more immersive learning experience.</p> <p>There are 129 coded responses related to direct interpersonal engagement.</p> |
| INNOVATIVE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES | <p>Physical Recreational Activities</p> <p>Social Recreational Activities</p> | <p><i>... activities that are more interactive like sports...</i></p> <p><i>... Dance activities...</i></p> <p><i>... possible sports-related activities...</i></p> <p><i>... team building...</i></p> <p><i>... more interactive activities like group chikahan and kamustahan...</i></p> <p><i>... Monthly kamustahan sessions...</i></p> | <p>Some participants in the peer mentoring program expressed the view that an additional essential component of their program would be innovative recreational activities, encompassing physical and social recreational activities. They highlighted the significance of incorporating enjoyable and engaging elements to foster a well-rounded and enriching experience for both mentors and mentees like sports, teambuilding, <i>kumustahan</i>, etc. Overall, the participants recognized the importance of balancing the program's academic focus with elements of entertainment and recreation.</p> <p>There are 19 coded responses related to innovative recreational activities.</p> |

DISCUSSION

It is shown in the results that the number of female participants outnumbered males. This is because most of the population of student nurses in the University of the Assumption are females. Women are more likely than men to pursue a healthcare-related career, particularly nursing, due to their natural ability to care for another human being and their nurturing inclination. Women make up 87% of RN employment and have 80% of overall growth in the healthcare industry (Dill, 2023). In terms of age, the highest number of

participants are 20 years old. Student nurses are often in their early to mid-20s. RN-to-BSN students are typically in their late 30s (Ball, 2021).

It is made clear that student nurses involved in the peer mentoring program are satisfied in the initiation or orientation stage, particularly in terms of the rapport established within their group, introductions done by group members, type of communication, language used, social atmosphere, ground rules, quality of their instructions, and the frequency of the group meetings. Participants at this stage clearly show a higher level of satisfaction with the language they use to communicate. Learning the language encouraged participation, engagement, and meaningful learning in the classroom, which was crucial to student satisfaction (Alsowat, 2016).

In the context of the dependence or nurturing stage, the results show that the participants are satisfied with the guidance and support of the mentors, objectives/goals set by the group, shared responsibilities of each member, opportunities to learn new skills and strategies learned essential concepts of the activity, learned strategies in performing an activity, facilitator's ability to discuss content matters, and teaching modalities by the facilitators. Under this stage, the results show that more than half of the participants are very satisfied with their opportunity to learn new skills. According to Bonrath et al. (2015), a highly effective strategy that greatly enhances training by facilitating the learning of new skills is comprehensive coaching.

Based on the results shown in the independence or autonomy stage, the results depict that the participants are all satisfied with the ability to think critically and independently, ability to utilize nursing knowledge independently, ability to perform nursing skills independently, the improvement today in comparison before they undergo peer mentoring activity, and the ability to choose strategies and ways to easily understand nursing concepts. According to Scribner (2019), cultivation is the primary stage of mentoring, during which the career and psychosocial components are addressed. The mentee's education is expanded, while the mentor benefits from the joy of passing on the knowledge. As knowledge grows, the mentees gain independence, which reduces the connection during the separation phase.

In the last stage of the mentoring life cycle, results show that more than half of the participants are satisfied with the outcome of the program and their ability to perform a nursing task. Overall, they are satisfied with the termination or the divorce stage of the peer mentoring program. According to Fuller (n.d.), mentors must engage in efforts to collaborate, implement, and support mentoring objectives and goals for each member to promote satisfaction. On the other hand, the overall satisfaction of student nurses' results indicates that participants are satisfied with the nursing protégé program. According to Benjamin (2004), exactly what expectations participants have of mentors is not known. Since this is likely to be participants' first experience with peer mentors at the university level, they may not know what to expect.

Using the Post Hoc Test, level III has a higher level of satisfaction compared to the other groups, in terms of the quality of group discussions, introducing nursing concepts,

the extent to which the program met their needs, and the content of all group discussions. This means that level III students are more likely to be satisfied with the program compared to other year levels. Third-year nursing students' clinical placements are fundamental in their professional development program. It is in that year that nursing students are exposed to vast learning experiences and opportunities. Their clinical skills are advanced, and a leadership role is expected to be evident during this tenure. Nursing students face a variety of challenges in these settings, and need sufficient clinical supervision (Zenani, 2016).

Benefits of Nursing Protégé

Overall, participants in the study identified nursing protégé as a form of learning that allows them to build connections and support with one another. Peer mentoring is recognized as a valuable approach to learning that enhances educational achievements and fosters the growth of students. It entails aiding fellow students, applying acquired knowledge, and establishing connections with others. Moreover, mentoring is underscored as a highly valuable service opportunity aimed at aiding students in their personal and academic development (Smith et al., 2021). The study places particular emphasis on the benefits that a mentee can derive from this experience, including enhanced teamwork skills, collaborative abilities, and overall personal growth, leading to a notable increase in self-confidence. In a similar vein, Blegur et al. (2019) highlight the significance of establishing authentic and caring relationships between mentors and participants, as this forms the foundation for effectively restoring the participants' self-assurance. By adopting this approach, participants are afforded the freedom to openly express themselves and autonomously evaluate their level of self-confidence, all the while receiving unwavering support and guidance from their mentors. According to Blegur et al. (2019), the following peer mentoring strategies can help students regain their self-confidence: (a) Establishing a limited, intimate discussion or study group between mentors and participants; (b) Ensuring that each group member has a caring, supportive, and inspiring attitude to encourage participants to be more open; (c) Being clear when giving participants assignments to maintain their focus and mood to continue learning; and (d) Giving participants complete trust so that they can take responsibility for their learning. (e) Evaluation of participant performance should be based on the desire for improvement rather than assessments based on negligence because of the participants.

Barriers/Challenges of Nursing Protégé

Time conflict, non-conducive environment, and uncooperative or passive group members were the barriers or challenges that the participants had identified. Due to unmatched schedules, students find it difficult to set regular meetings to facilitate the mentoring without compromising each other's class hours. The risks and challenges faced by mentors encompass the delicate task of finding a balance between fulfilling the specific requirements of their role as mentors and their desire to excel in this capacity, all while managing their time effectively and juggling with other commitments. Mentors often

encounter the inherent difficulty of navigating between meeting the expectations set for them and their aspirations to provide valuable guidance and support. This entails making conscious efforts to allocate sufficient time and energy to mentorship responsibilities without neglecting their other obligations and commitments (Smith et al., 2021). Since the global pandemic changed the traditional way of learning, a preferable online distance learning was taken into consideration for health purposes. Lack of student participation has a negative impact on the process because it is the main determinant of how effective online learning is. Modern technology has made several strides, and if properly applied, these developments could greatly enhance the learning process. In the modern era, especially considering the Covid-19 epidemic, the idea of online learning is extensively studied and applied. A high level of student engagement is ideal since it ensures that the students are eager to learn and willing to comply with their mentors' directions. (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016). According to Kahn (2013) claim that student participation in the online learning environment has been subpar. Additionally, the degree of retention after such studies is found to be lower compared to more traditional modes of education. As a result, there is a downward trend in low student involvement in online learning, which is being influenced by several reasons.

Additional Activities for Nursing Protégé

Based on the findings collected by the researchers, in-person interaction is way better in comparison to the new method of online learning. As stated in the article by Cooke (2022), students are more engaged in classrooms in person because they provide a more immersive and interactive learning environment. The participants desire a more collaborative and lively interaction. They proposed that peer mentoring should occur in person and incorporate recreational activities to prevent the participants from feeling overwhelmed by the tasks. The participants expressed their preference for a well-rounded experience beyond academic focus, aiming for a meaningful and engaging interaction. Peer mentors should assist participants in boosting their self-assurance and sharing their knowledge to support fellow student nurses (Mahri et al., 2020).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded, that the socio-demographic profile of the participants encompasses the (a) age, (b) sex, (c) year level, and (d) general weighted average of 2nd semester academic year 2021-2022. First off, since many people enroll in nursing programs right after high school, student nurses are typically between the ages of late teens and early twenties. The nursing field has historically been dominated by women, and this trend is frequently seen among the student nurse population as well. Thirdly, information about a student nurse's year level can be obtained about how far along they are in the program. Finally, a measure of the academic performance of student nurses is to be found in the general weighted average (GWA) of the second semester of the

academic year 2021–2022. This metric evaluates students' overall grades throughout a given period, which reflects their level of academic achievement.

As a result of most students responding that they are satisfied with the four stages of the mentoring cycle, it has become clear that nursing schools demand more assistance. It has been found that participants' overall satisfaction with the peer mentoring activity varies significantly by year level, especially level III. It can be concluded from this that each student has specific needs and expectations and that their level of satisfaction with peer mentoring may depend on factors other than their year level, such as the nature of the mentoring relationship, their ability to communicate, and their compatibility with their peers. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the overall satisfaction of student nurses across their year level.

Qualitative findings have a significant impact on nursing education generally as well as the development of satisfactory peer mentoring in a tertiary catholic university, College of Nursing and Pharmacy. Findings show that student nurses involved in the peer mentoring program are benefiting the nursing protégé program through gaining proficiency, interpersonal engagement, attainable help, teamwork and collaboration, and personality development. With this, it can be concluded that the peer mentoring program enables students to have additional support along their nursing journey. The traditional classroom setting has been transformed into a more adaptable online distance learning environment as a result of this ongoing pandemic. However, the virtual set-up did not demonstrate a suitable environment for student nurses to do and finish peer mentoring very well. As a result, it can be said that the nursing protégé program will be more actively participated in by students if it is facilitated in person. The study also emphasizes the importance of including recreational activities and in-person peer mentoring to prevent burnout and improve engagement. Participants wished for a richer and more interesting discussion that goes beyond a purely academic focus. They looked for peer mentors who could help them build their confidence and share knowledge with them so they could help other student nurses.

The study's results and findings suggest that there are ways to further improve the nursing protégé program of the University of the Assumption, College of Nursing and Pharmacy. While most participants expressed satisfaction with the program, there is still potential for it to achieve the highest level of satisfaction.

Adopting the mentoring life cycle of Hay offers numerous benefits, including a structured approach, support and guidance, knowledge transfer, and personal growth. There should be a program or checklist for each stage of the mentoring life cycle to follow over two semesters in one academic year. This will surely provide a structured framework for mentors and mentees, ensuring that the mentoring relationship progresses systematically. This structure helps both parties understand their roles and responsibilities throughout the mentoring process.

The perceived barriers of students are a key component to be considered to know specific actions to address the said challenges. It would be better if the nursing protege were done in person without affecting the class hours of all students. There should be an allotted time for them to do the progress of their work. While there may be instances where remote or virtual mentoring is necessary or beneficial, in-person mentoring offers unique advantages in terms of building personal connections, facilitating real-time feedback, enabling observational learning, providing networking opportunities, offering tailored support, leveraging non-verbal communication, and fostering trust and confidence.

Recreational activities make learning more enjoyable and engaging. By introducing elements of fun and play, students are more likely to be motivated and actively participate in the learning experience. This increased engagement can lead to improved retention of information and a positive attitude towards learning. By incorporating recreational activities like games, sports, etc. in the peer mentoring program, the seemingly impossible of them being engaged in the mentoring program can be possible. Recreational activities that involve hands-on experiences and interactive elements can enhance memory retention and recall. The multisensory nature of these activities stimulates different parts of the brain, making the learning experience more memorable. When students have fun while learning, they are more likely to remember and retain the information for longer periods.

Future researchers may explore the development of a customary framework for the Nursing Protégé Program as a peer mentoring mechanism, which may be applicable in academe and clinical practice. A more in-depth multi-method and/or mixed-method study may be employed to yield an evidence-based program reframing the design as applicable in their locale of study. Particularly, for this study, a quantitative identification of learners' needs may be critical in designing a needs-based annual program.

IMPLICATIONS

The study has important implications for various stakeholders in the field of nursing education and practice. First, the study's findings provide educators with insights on how to enhance the nursing protégé program. Educators can utilize the study's recommendations to refine the program structure, curriculum, and mentorship strategies. They can also emphasize the importance of ongoing evaluation and feedback to ensure continuous improvement of the program. Additionally, educators can explore innovative teaching methodologies and pedagogical approaches to create a more engaging and effective learning environment for student nurses.

For student nurses, this study highlights the importance of actively participating in the nursing protégé program. Student nurses can benefit from the findings by seeking mentorship opportunities, engaging in open communication with their mentors, and actively utilizing the resources provided. They can also advocate for their needs and provide feedback to further enhance the program's effectiveness. The study emphasizes

the value of mentorship in supporting their professional growth and developing a strong foundation for their nursing careers.

The findings of the research for nurses highlight the value of mentoring for career advancement. Nurses may want to think about taking on the role of mentor by helping and encouraging new nurses. The study's recommendations can assist nurses in improving their mentoring abilities, developing lasting connections with their mentees, and advancing the nursing profession. The findings highlight the mutually beneficial nature of mentoring, as seasoned nurses can gain from the new ideas and perceptions of mentees.

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Conflict of Interest

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Informed Consent

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Ethics Approval

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