

THE EFFECT OF A BENNER-BASED MENTORING PROGRAM ON KNOWLEDGE AND PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES IN REDUCING TRANSITION SHOCK AMONG NOVICE NURSES

Zulhetti Dasrul¹, Blacius Dedi ², M. Jamaludin³

¹Master of Nursing Program, Universitas Karya Husada Semarang, Indonesia

²Faculty of Nursing and Health Science, Universitas Karya Husada Semarang, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: dzulhetti@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: The transition from academic education to clinical practice represents a critical stage in the professional development of novice nurses and is often accompanied by transition shock. This phenomenon may hinder the development of professional competence and negatively affect nurses' confidence and adaptation to clinical roles. During this period, structured support is essential not only to improve knowledge but also to strengthen professional identity and attitudes. Clinical Nurse I (CN I) represents the early stage of professional practice in which guidance from experienced nurses is crucial to achieve competency standards. Mentoring based on Benner's *From Novice to Expert Theory* provides a theoretical framework to facilitate competency development and support professional transition. **Objective:** This study aimed to examine the effect of a mentoring program based on Benner's *From Novice to Expert Theory* on knowledge and professional attitudes among novice nurses. **Methods:** A quasi-experimental study with a pretest–posttest control group design was conducted among 64 Clinical Nurse I nurses. Participants were divided into an intervention group and a control group. The intervention group received a structured mentoring program emphasizing reflective learning, professional guidance, and role modeling. Data were collected using validated questionnaires measuring knowledge and professional attitudes. Data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and Mann–Whitney U test. **Results:** The intervention group demonstrated significant improvements in knowledge ($\Delta = 2.19$; $p = 0.005$) and professional attitudes ($\Delta = 2.11$; $p = 0.005$), whereas no significant changes were observed in the control group. Post-test comparisons revealed significantly higher scores in the intervention group ($p < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** Mentoring based on Benner's theory effectively enhances cognitive and affective competencies among novice nurses. The program also contributes to reducing transition shock and strengthening professional identity during the early stages of professional practice.

Keywords: mentoring; knowledge; professional attitudes; transition shock; professional identity

Copyright © 2026 Authors



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 4.0 International License

INTRODUCTION

Transition shock is widely recognized as a major challenge experienced by newly graduated nurses during the transition from academic education to professional clinical practice. This phenomenon occurs when novice nurses encounter discrepancies between theoretical knowledge acquired during nursing education and the complex realities of healthcare environments. During this transition period, newly graduated nurses frequently experience uncertainty, decreased confidence, and difficulties in adapting to clinical

responsibilities and workplace expectations (Moon et al., 2024). These challenges may influence clinical decision-making, professional competence, and the quality of patient care.

The transition period is critical because nurses play a central role in maintaining patient safety and ensuring the quality of healthcare services. Inadequate preparation and lack of support during early professional practice may increase the risk of clinical errors and negatively affect the quality of care provided to patients. Nursing competence is not limited to technical skills but also includes cognitive and

affective components such as knowledge, professional attitudes, critical thinking, and responsibility in clinical decision-making (Pueyo-garrigues et al., 2022; Yin et al., 2023). Therefore, strengthening these competencies is essential, particularly for nurses who are entering the early stages of professional practice.

In many healthcare institutions, newly graduated nurses begin their professional careers as Clinical Nurse I (CN I), where they transition from supervised educational environments to more independent clinical roles. At this stage, limited clinical experience may influence confidence, decision-making ability, and adaptation to complex clinical environments. Previous studies have shown that insufficient support during the transition period may lead to increased stress, reduced job satisfaction, and difficulties in professional role adaptation among novice nurses (Rossiter et al., 2024). Consequently, healthcare organizations need to provide structured support systems that facilitate the development of competence and professional identity among novice nurses.

Mentoring has been widely recognized as an effective strategy to support the professional development of novice nurses during their transition into clinical practice. Through mentoring programs, novice nurses receive structured guidance, experiential learning opportunities, and constructive feedback from experienced nurses. These interactions contribute to the development of clinical competence, professional confidence, and positive professional attitudes (Inmaculada et al., 2023; Mikkonen et al., 2022). Previous studies have also demonstrated that mentoring programs can improve clinical skills, promote professional development, and support the retention of newly graduated nurses in healthcare organizations (Nasiri et al., 2023; Rn et al., 2023).

One theoretical framework that explains the development of nursing competence is Benner's From Novice to Expert

theory. This theory describes how nurses progress through different stages of competence, ranging from novice to expert, through clinical experience and guided learning (Benner, 2001). According to Benner's model, novice nurses initially rely on rules and theoretical knowledge but gradually develop clinical judgment and professional competence through experiential learning and mentorship from experienced practitioners. Therefore, mentoring programs based on Benner's theoretical framework may provide a structured approach to support competence development and facilitate the transition from novice to more advanced levels of clinical practice.

Despite the growing evidence supporting mentoring in nursing education and clinical practice, empirical studies examining mentoring programs specifically designed based on Benner's theoretical framework remain limited, particularly within the Indonesian clinical context. Furthermore, most previous studies have focused primarily on clinical competence or skills, while relatively few studies have simultaneously examined both cognitive and affective domains, such as knowledge and professional attitudes among novice nurses. Addressing these gaps is important to better understand how structured mentoring interventions may support novice nurses during their transition into professional practice.

Therefore, this study aimed to examine the effect of a Benner-based mentoring program on knowledge and professional attitudes in reducing transition shock among novice nurses.

METHODS

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest–posttest control group approach to examine the effect of a mentoring program on the knowledge and professional attitudes of Clinical Nurse I (CN I). The study was conducted in the inpatient wards of Hospital X in 2025.

The study population consisted of all Clinical Nurse I nurses working in the inpatient units. A total sampling technique was used, and all eligible nurses who met the inclusion criteria were recruited. A total of 64 participants were included and allocated into an intervention group (n = 32) and a control group (n = 32).

The intervention group received a structured clinical mentoring program based on Benner's *From Novice to Expert Theory*. The program included orientation sessions, guided clinical practice, mentor-led observation, reflective discussions, and periodic feedback. In contrast, the control group continued routine nursing practice in accordance with hospital policies without structured mentoring.

Data were collected using validated questionnaires measuring knowledge and professional attitudes. All instruments demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients greater than 0.90. Data collection was conducted at baseline (pretest) and after the intervention (post-test) in both groups.

Normality testing using the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the data were not normally distributed. Therefore, non-parametric tests were applied. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to compare pretest and posttest scores within groups, while the Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess differences between groups. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

This study received ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Karya Husada Semarang (No: 005/KEP/UNKAHA/LPPM2/II/2026). All participants provided informed consent before participating in the study, and confidentiality of the respondents' data was strictly maintained.

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

Tabel 1. Characteristics of Respondents (n=64)

Characteristics	Category	n (%)
-----------------	----------	-------

Gender	Female	64 (100)
Age (years)	< 25	8 (12.5)
	25–30	55 (85.9)
	31–35	1 (1.6)
Education	Bachelor (Ners)	64 (100)
Work Experience (years)	1	24 (37.5)
	>1–2	30 (46.9)
	> 2-3	10 (15.6)

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. All participants were female (100%). The majority were aged 25–30 years (85.9%), followed by those aged under 25 years (12.5%) and 31–35 years (1.6%). All respondents held a Bachelor of Nursing (Ners) degree. In terms of work experience, most participants had 1–2 years of experience (46.9%), followed by those with 1 year (37.5%) and more than 2–3 years (15.6%). These findings indicate that the participants were predominantly at an early stage of their professional careers, which is consistent with the study population of novice nurses. The relatively homogeneous distribution of baseline characteristics between the groups suggests good comparability, thereby reducing the potential influence of confounding variables and strengthening the internal validity of the study.

Changes in Knowledge and Professional Attitudes Among Novice Nurses

Table 2 Comparison of Pretest-Posttest Knowledge and Professional Attitude Scores in the Intervention and Control Groups.

Variable	Group	Pretest (Mean ± SD)	Posttest (Mean ± SD)	p-value
Knowledge	Intervention	41.11 ± 5.66	43.30 ± 4.79	0.005
	Control	40.95 ± 5.40	41.10 ± 5.35	0.317
Professional Attitude	Intervention	41.53 ± 5.66	43.64 ± 4.42	0.005
	Control	41.20 ± 5.50	41.35 ± 5.48	0.284

Table 2 summarizes the changes in knowledge and professional attitudes between pretest and posttest in both groups. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test demonstrated statistically significant improvements in the intervention group following the mentoring program. Specifically, knowledge scores increased by 2.19 points ($p = 0.005$), while professional attitude scores improved by 2.11 points ($p = 0.005$), indicating a meaningful enhancement in both cognitive and affective domains. In contrast, no significant changes were observed in the control group for either knowledge or professional attitudes ($p > 0.05$).

Table 3. Comparison of Posttest Knowledge and Professional Attitudes Between Intervention and Control Groups

Variable	Group	n	Mean Rank	p-value
Knowledge (Posttest)	Intervention	32	37.09	< 0.05
	Control	32	27.91	
Professional Attitudes (Posttest)	Intervention	32	36.72	< 0.05
	Control	32	28.28	

Table 3 presents the comparison of posttest scores between the intervention and control groups. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups ($p < 0.05$). The intervention group achieved higher mean ranks in both knowledge (37.09 vs. 27.91) and professional attitudes (36.72 vs. 28.28), indicating superior outcomes compared to the control group. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the structured mentoring program significantly improved both knowledge and professional attitudes among novice nurses, whereas no meaningful improvements were observed in the control group.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the effect of a mentoring program based on Benner's

From Novice to Expert Theory on knowledge and professional attitudes among novice nurses. The findings demonstrate that the mentoring program significantly improved both knowledge and professional attitudes among nurses in the intervention group compared with those in the control group.

These findings indicate that mentoring plays an important role in supporting novice nurses during the transition from academic education to professional practice. Structured guidance, reflective learning, and continuous professional support provided through mentoring help increase confidence and reduce uncertainty during the transition period (Moon et al., 2024).

The improvement in knowledge observed in this study is consistent with previous research indicating that mentoring enhances clinical competence and critical thinking among novice nurses (Raija et al., 2023). Through mentoring interactions, novice nurses are exposed to real clinical situations that enable them to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical experience.

Similarly, the significant improvement in professional attitudes observed in this study highlights the important role of mentoring in the professional socialization of novice nurses. Through mentoring relationships, experienced nurses serve as professional role models who demonstrate ethical practice, professional communication, and accountability in clinical decision-making. Continuous interaction between mentors and novice nurses allows the transfer of professional values, norms, and expectations within the clinical environment. This process facilitates the development of professional identity and strengthens positive professional attitudes among newly graduated nurses (Wang et al., 2024). As novice nurses observe and participate in real clinical situations under mentor guidance, they gradually internalize professional standards and develop greater responsibility in delivering patient care.

These findings are consistent with Benner's *From Novice to Expert Theory*, which emphasizes that competence develops progressively through clinical experience and guided learning (Benner, 2001). Continuous mentorship allows novice nurses to develop contextual understanding and more advanced clinical reasoning skills. Furthermore, mentoring programs have been associated with broader organizational benefits, including improved job satisfaction, reduced work stress, and increased nurse retention (Hagrass et al., 2023). Therefore, mentoring should be considered an important strategy for supporting professional development and improving healthcare quality.

CONCLUSION

Mentoring programs based on Benner's *From Novice to Expert Theory* significantly improve knowledge and professional attitudes among novice nurses. Furthermore, mentoring contributes to reducing transition shock and strengthening professional identity, which are essential for sustainable professional development. Hospital management is encouraged to integrate mentoring programs based on Benner's theory into structured orientation and professional development systems. Future research should consider longitudinal designs to examine the long-term impact of mentoring on nurse performance and healthcare quality.

REFERENCES

- Benner, P. (2001). *From novice to expert: Excellence and power in clinical nursing practice (Commemorative ed.)*. Prentice Hall. 2001.
- Hagrass, H. M., Ibrahim, S. A. E., Anany, R. I. E., & El-gazar, H. E. (2023). *Effect of an educational program about mentorship competencies on nurse mentors' performance: a quasi-experimental study*. 1–10.
- Inmaculada, M., Gonz, D., Cuesta, D., & Narvi, B. (2023). *Nurse Mentoring: A Scoping Review*. 1–15.
- Mikkonen, K., Tomietto, M., Tuomikoski, M., Miha, B., Olga, K., Flores, R., Pérez-, R. M., Bojana, C., Giedre, F., Cicolini, G., & Kääriäinen, M. (2022). *Mentors' competence in mentoring nursing students in clinical practice: Detecting profiles to enhance mentoring practices*. May 2021, 593–603. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.1103>
- Moon, S., Won, H., & Seok, U. (2024). *Nurse Education Today Exploring the impact of the mentoring new nurses for transition and empowerment program led by clinical nurse educators in South Korea: A mixed-methods study*. *Nurse Education Today*, 140(May 2023), 106251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2024.106251>
- Nasiri, M., Sabery, M., & Rezaei, M. (2023). *The effects of mentorship and educational videos on nursing students' physical examination skills: a clinical audit*. 1–9.
- Pueyo-garrigues, M., Pardavila-belio, M. I., Canga-armayor, A., & Esandi, N. (2022). *Nurse Education in Practice NURSES' knowledge, skills and personal attributes for providing competent health education practice, and its influencing factors: A cross-sectional study*. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 58, 103277. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2021.103277>
- Raija, L., Kein, A., & Mikkonen, K. (2023). *Nurse Education Today Effectiveness of mentoring education on health care professionals mentoring competence: A systematic review*. 121(June 2022). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2023.105709>
- Rn, J. G., Baumgardner, R., Rn, B. S. N., Tilton, T., Rn, M. S. N., Brailoff, V., & Rn, M. S. (2023). *Mentorship ReSPeCT Study: A Nurse Mentorship Program's Impact on Transition to Practice and Decision to Remain in Nursing for Newly Graduated Nurses*. *Nurse Leader*, 21(2), 262–267. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2022.07.003>
- Rositer, R., Robinson, T., Hons, B. A., Cox, R., Collison, L., & Hills, D. (2024). *Mentors Supporting Nurses Transitioning to Primary Healthcare Roles: A Practice Improvement Initiative*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23779608241231174>
- Wang, Y., Hu, S., Yao, J., Pan, Y., Wang, J., & Wang, H. (2024). *Clinical nursing mentors' motivation, attitude, and practice for mentoring and factors associated with them*. 1–15.
- Yin, L., Wang, F., Li, Q., Feng, X., Li, Y., Li, L., Yin, L., Wang, F., Li, Q., Feng, X., Li, Y., & Li, L. (2023). *A Cross-Sectional Descriptive Study on the Attitudes Towards Patient Safety and Influencing Factors of Nurses in Infectious Diseases Wards A Cross-Sectional Descriptive Study on the Attitudes Towards Patient Safety and Influencing Factors of Nurses in Infectious Diseases Wards*. 2390. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JMDH.S401373>