

## Conference Paper

# Professional Quality of Life as Perceived by New Graduate Nurses

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## Abstract

The study of professional quality of life (PQL) in nursing has increased recently. However, limited studies have been explored for younger nurses. The aim of this study was to explore professional quality of life experienced by new graduate nurses. This study was a mixed-method study using a convergent parallel design. The instruments applied in this study included a modified Professional Quality of Life (ProQoL [PQL]) Scale, an open-ended questionnaire and a diary. This study applied a purposive sampling with a criterion sampling method. A sample of 30 new graduate nurses was recruited. This study showed that students have experienced both positive and negative aspects of PQL. Compassion satisfaction has been experienced by the new graduates at average to high levels, which included feelings of satisfaction, getting many lessons and lots of supports. Compassion fatigue has also been experienced by the new graduates in the level of average (Burnout and Secondary Trauma Stress/STS), the fatigue experiences were associated with challenges in clinical areas and the many responsibilities that the new graduated had to bear.

**Keywords:** professional quality of life, new graduate nurses

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The journey of being a nurse involved demanding workloads, challenging clinical practice and witnessing traumatic life-traumatic events (Beaumont, Durkin & Martin 2016; [8]). These involvements will negatively affect the young nurses' wellbeing as well as diminish their level of professional quality of life [2]. The professional quality of life (PQL) refers to working hazards experienced by nurses which may include compassion fatigue and burnout as well as working protective factor namely compassion satisfaction that could affect a helping profession [8, 13, 14]. Stamm (2010) proposed that PQL consisted of two aspects: compassion fatigue (CF) as the negative aspect and compassion satisfaction (CS) as the positive aspect. Compassion fatigue was comprised of burnout/BO and secondary traumatic stress/STS [14].

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A low level of PQL may reduce the productivity of nurses which further results in a high turnover of nurses [2], especially young nurses [8]. Gemeay et al. also mentioned that younger workers lacked experiences to manage their stressful working situation even in their life situations. Therefore it is important to have an insight on how the stressful experience contributes to quality of life of nurses in their professional settings. The purpose of this study was to explore the professional quality of life experienced by new graduate nurse both in quantitative and qualitative ways.

## 2. METHODS

This study was part of a bigger study that applied a mixed method using a convergent parallel design [4]. The study collected and analysed both qualitative and quantitative data in the same phase that produced a combine interpretation result. The ethical approval was obtained from Mochtar Riady Institute for Nanotechnology (MRIN Ethics Committee). The instruments used in this study including a modified Professional Quality of Life (ProQoL V) Scale [14] that has been adapted and translated into the Indonesian language, a modified open-ended questions questionnaire [3] and a diary. The instruments of this study were translated and culturally adapted [6].

The population of this study was new graduate nurses (31 students) from one university. This study applied a purposive sampling with criterion sampling method (Patton 2015; Polit & Beck 2012). A sample of 30 new graduate nurses was recruited (response rate 96.77%).

## 3. Results

The results of this current study consisted of respondents' characteristics data, quantitative data based on a modified ProQoL V questionnaire and qualitative data based on modified open-ended questions and a diary method. The results can be seen in Tables 1-4.

More than half of the respondents were 23 year (60%), female (83.3%), came from Sulawesi (7%) and Sumatera (7%) (Table 1).

In regards with the respondents' quality of life, more than half of the new graduate were at average level (see Table 2) in experiencing compassion satisfaction (66.67%), burnout (60%) and secondary traumatic stress (66.67%).

TABLE 1: The fresh graduate characteristics

Characteristic		Fresh Graduate n (%)
Age (Year)	22	6(20)
	23	18(60)
	24	5(16.67)
	25	1(3.33)
Gender	Male	5(16.67)
	Female	25(83.33)
Hometown (Province)	Banten	3(10)
	DKI Jakarta	1(3.33)
	Jawa	4(13.33)
	Kalimantan	2(6.67)
	Lampung	3(10)
	Maluku	1(3.33)
	NTT	2(6.67)
	Sulawesi	7(23.33)
	Sumatera	7(23.33)

TABLE 2: Professional Quality of Life of New Graduate Nurse

Professional Quality of Life	N	Mean	SD	Level		
				Low (N/%)	Average (N/%)	High (N/%)
Compassion Satisfaction	30	40.4	4.65	0	20(66.67)	10 (33.33)
Burnout	30	4.44	4.44	12(40%)	18(60)	0
Secondary Trauma Stress	30	5.01	5.01	10(33.33)	20(66.67)	0

Two themes further emerged from the open-ended questions (Table 3). The respondents provided their negative and positive experiences on their journey of being new graduate nurses in their new working environment.

The new graduate nurses described their experiences when working with their senior nurses. In the clinical setting, a new graduate stated that he faced challenging situations such as dealing with impatient nurses:

“Mungkin pengalaman yang kurang menyenangkan adalah ketika harus berhadapan dengan perawat-perawat di rumah sakit yang sedikit judes”/ Perhaps the unpleasant

TABLE 3: Themes emerged from open-ended questions

Theme	Sub-theme
Negative experience	Feeling of depressed
	No motivation
	Challenge in the practical area
Positive experience	Feeling of satisfaction
	Getting a lot of lessons
	The support of the facilities, faculty and colleagues

TABLE 4: Themes of the diary

Theme	Sub-theme
Pleasant experience	Positive fulfilled feelings in the work
	Persistent in the work
Unpleasant experience	Tiredness in the work
	Lots of work responsibilities
	Unprofessional
	Negative feeling

experience was dealing with the hospital nurses who were a bit bitchy (New graduate, male, Nias).

In contrast, another new graduate further stated that her study was a valuable experience:

“Seeing the patient’s smile and satisfaction. When the patients said thank you, when they shared their struggles, and when they showed appreciation toward the nurses” (New graduate, female, Chinese Manado).

Moreover, five out of 30 new graduate nurses participated in this study by writing their experiences in the diary for 5-7 days in relation to their new job. Similar with the open-ended questions findings, the new graduate nurses expressed their experiences by providing pleasant and unpleasant experiences. The results of the diary can be seen in Table 4.

A new graduate nurse stated that “Saya merasa beban akan pekerjaan lebih tinggi, namun saya merasa puas mampu melakukannya dengan baik”/ I feel the burden of work is getting higher, but I feel satisfied having done them well. In contrast, other new graduate expressed feelings of tiredness by stating:

“Dinas pagi bertugas sebagai primary nurse dan penanggung jawa ruangan. Tidak ada masalah yang berarti, hanya hampir semua pasien sering bel memanggil perawat memang agak melelahkan, tetapi itu sudah sering terjadi” / At the morning shift as the primary nurse and the person in charge. There was no significant problems, all of the patients often called the nurse, it was a bit tiring, but that was just a routine that happened often times.

## 4. Discussion

The new graduate nurse who just finished their academic journey may experience many challenges in their new working environment which may continually affect their professional quality of life (PQL). In this current study, the new graduate nurses have experienced the negative aspects of PQL. More than half of the new graduate experienced burnout and STS at the average levels. One of the reasons might be lack of knowledge and skills to deal with the unexpected experiences such as high demand job and stressful environment [8].

Some previous studies in nursing education (e.g. Kleiveland et. al. 2015; Stevanie 2015; Stoves 2014; Tomaschewski et al. 2014) have also reported that overwhelmed task, long learning sessions in the class or laboratory, poor grades on exams, and trauma experienced in the clinical settings could cause compassion fatigue. These conditions might represent the new working environment characterized by “highly structured care units, closed environment and continuous events of dealing with unexpected critical situations” ([8], p.51). Mason and Juan (2012) further revealed that most of the student nurses were at risk of burnout (63.75%), though the level of student nurses’ compassion satisfaction was high (61.25%).

Compassion satisfaction as the positive aspect of PQL was also experienced by the new graduate in which all of them experienced compassion satisfaction at moderate (66.67%) or high (33.33%) levels. The new graduate mentioned that they were satisfied with the opportunities of learning and the support provided by their colleagues and educators.

A number of previous studies (e.g. [5, 7, 10]) reported that most of the nursing students were satisfied with their learning journey and only few of them experienced burnout. A study in Indonesia showed final year nursing students who near completion of their study experienced moderate (57.7%) or high (42.3%) levels of compassion satisfaction with burnout at the average level (50.3%) and more than half students experienced a low level of STS [6]. Some contributing factors may include

the students' ability to adapt to their learning environment and coping strategies in effectively dealing with negative experiences [10]. On the other hand, Gemeay et al. (2016) argued that compassion satisfaction experiences did not hinder the respondents from the risk of burnout depending on their personality and cultural background. For example, the new graduate nurses might repress their negative emotions and feelings then positively transfer to a delightful feeling to cope with the situation [8].

## 5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that new graduate nurses who had many challenges in adapting to their new working environment have experienced both satisfaction and fatigue experiences. Both experiences were supported by quantitative and qualitative data resulted from this current study.

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