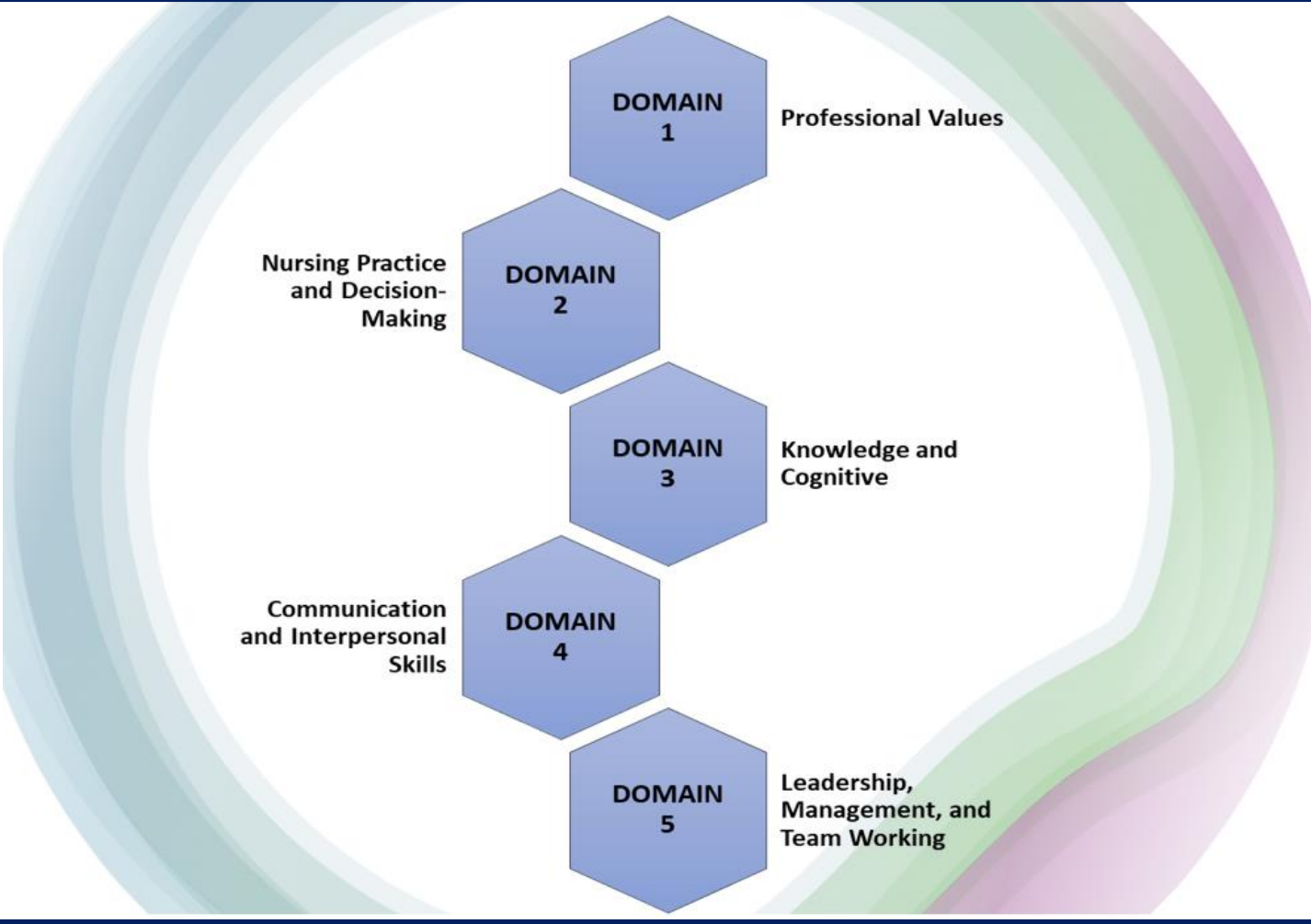


Development, Implementation, and Validation of a Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Competency Framework, UAE

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Background

Delivering high-quality psychiatric nursing care requires a robust competency framework to ensure standardised and evidence-based practice. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Al Amal Hospital, a tertiary psychiatric care facility currently lacks a validated, context-specific competency model for nursing staff. This gap risks inconsistencies in care delivery, suboptimal patient outcomes, and limited professional development opportunities in this specialised domain.



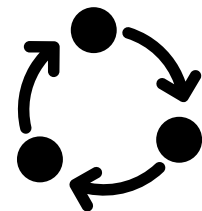
Research Aim

This study aims to develop, implement, and validate a Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing Competency Model (PMHNCM) tailored to the clinical and cultural context of Al Amal Hospital in UAE. The framework establishes measurable standards for both registered and advanced practice nurses, aligning with international benchmarks while addressing local priorities.



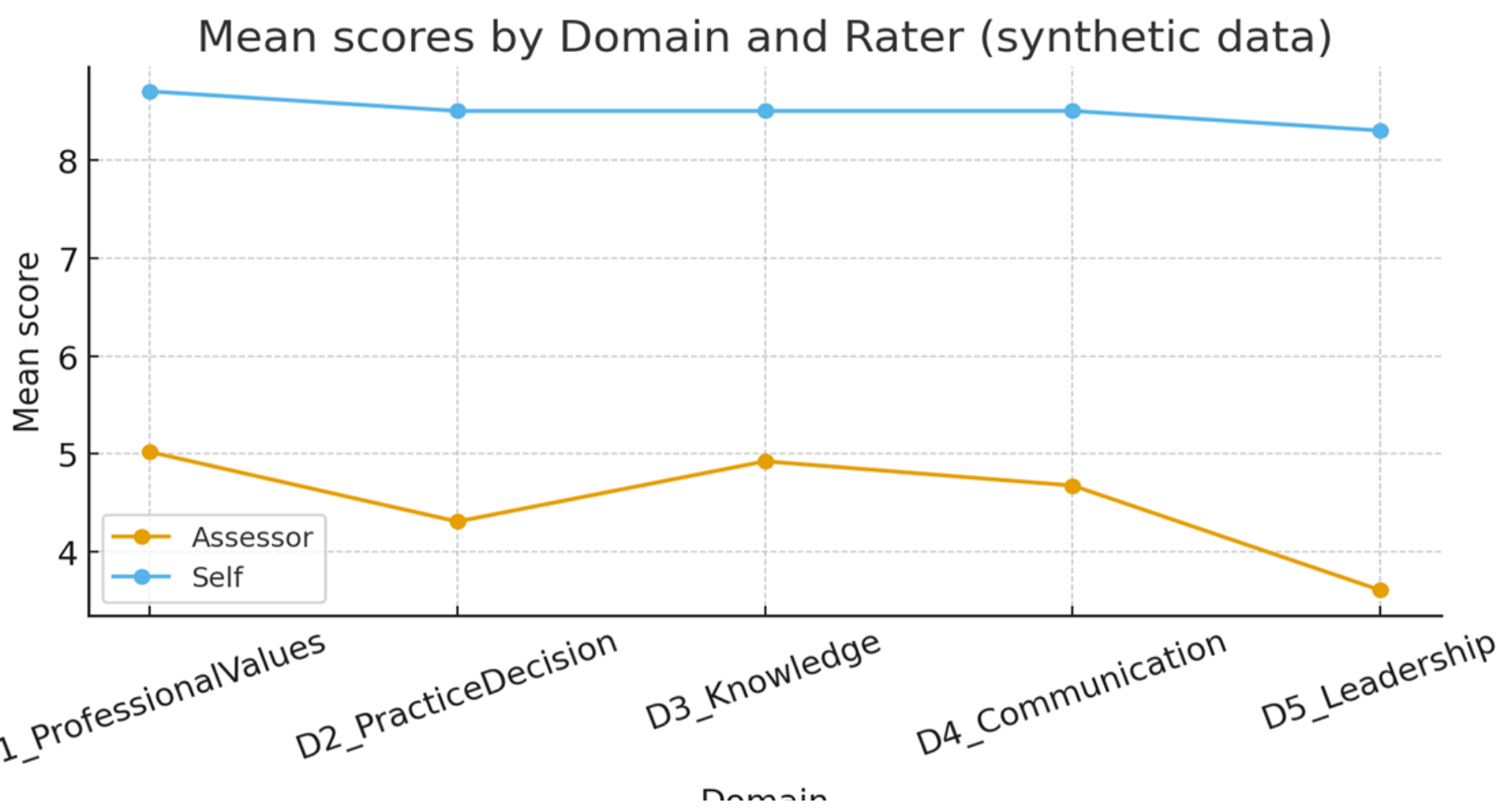
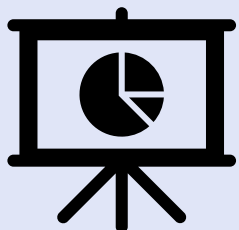
Design Methodology

A sequential mixed-methods design will be employed across three phases. Development: A systematic review of global frameworks will inform the initial model, followed by a three-round modified Delphi process with 8 psychiatric nursing experts to reach consensus on core competencies. Implementation: A pilot educational intervention (n=50 nurses) will integrate didactic training, high-fidelity simulation, and competency verification via Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs). Validation: Evaluation will include nurse self-assessments (pre-and post-intervention), patient satisfaction surveys, clinical outcome audits (e.g., restraint use, medication errors), and 360-degree performance appraisals.



Results

The study is expected to yield (1) a validated, culturally adapted PMHNCM with robust psychometric properties; (2) significant improvements in nurse competencies across cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains; and (3) measurable enhancements in patient-reported experiences and clinical quality indicators. A baseline assessment of 47 nurses, representing 20% of the workforce, identified marked discrepancies between self-perceived and externally observed competence. Self-assessment scores were consistently high (mean 8.3–8.7 across domains), yet assessor ratings were substantially lower. The most pronounced gaps were observed in Leadership and Teamwork (mean 3.5 vs. 8.3; $t = 15.72$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.30$) and Nursing Practice and Decision-Making (mean 4.0–4.5 vs. 8.5; $t = 14.85$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.10$). These results indicate critical competency deficits in trauma-informed care, ethical decision-making, evidence-based practice, and leadership, underscoring the need for a structured and contextually relevant nursing competency framework.

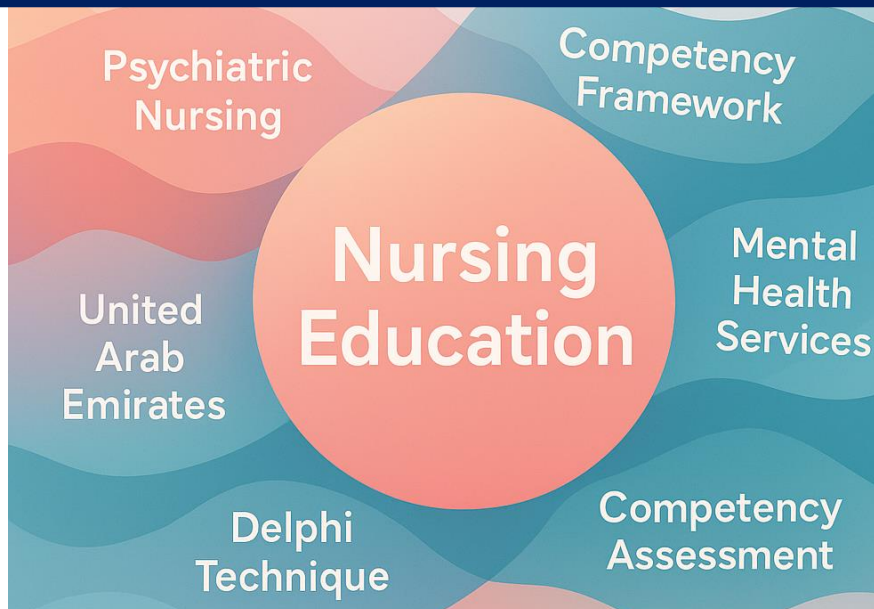


Comparison of Assessor and Self-Assessment Scores Across Competency Domains (N = 47)

Domain	Assessor Mean $\pm$ SD	Self-Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean Diff $\pm$ SD	95% CI of Diff	t(df=46)	p	Cohen's d	η^2	Interpretation
D1: Professional Values	5.3 $\pm$ 1.2	8.7 $\pm$ 0.9	3.4 $\pm$ 1.0	[2.8, 4.0]	11.23	<.001	1.64	.73	Large
D2: Practice & Decision-Making	4.25 $\pm$ 1.4	8.5 $\pm$ 0.8	4.5 $\pm$ 1.1	[3.9, 5.1]	14.85	<.001	2.10	.82	Very Large
D3: Knowledge & Competence	5.0 $\pm$ 1.3	8.5 $\pm$ 0.7	3.5 $\pm$ 1.2	[2.9, 4.1]	10.41	<.001	1.50	.70	Large
D4: Communication Skills	4.5 $\pm$ 1.1	8.5 $\pm$ 0.9	4.0 $\pm$ 1.0	[3.4, 4.6]	12.02	<.001	1.70	.76	Large
D5: Leadership & Teamwork	3.5 $\pm$ 1.2	8.3 $\pm$ 0.8	4.8 $\pm$ 1.2	[4.2, 5.4]	15.72	<.001	2.30	.84	Extremely Large

Conclusions

This research will provide the first empirically validated psychiatric nursing competency framework in the Gulf region, advancing workforce development and standardising care at Al Amal Hospital. The model offers a replicable template for other mental health institutions in the UAE and establishes a methodological precedent for contextual adaptation of competency frameworks in specialised healthcare settings. **Keywords:** *psychiatric nursing, competency framework, mental health services, nursing education, United Arab Emirates, Delphi technique, competency assessment*



References

NMC. (2018). Standards of proficiency for registered nurses. (This is the foundational document outlining what is expected of all registered nurses in the UK. While not specific to mental health, it sets the baseline competencies from which PMH nursing specialisms build.)
NMC. (2019). Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes. (Informs how competencies are taught and assessed at the student level.)
NMC. (Various publications on revalidation and post-registration standards). (These will highlight ongoing competency development and maintenance for practicing nurses.)
RCN. (Various publications). Competence and education guidance for mental health nurses. (The RCN often publishes detailed competency frameworks and guidance specific to mental health nursing practice, advanced practice, and specific interventions. You'll need to search their publications for the most current versions, e.g., on psychosis, dementia, child and adolescent mental health, etc.)
RCN. (2018). RCN Competencies: Registered Nurse (Mental Health) for all settings. (This is a key document that outlines the expected competencies for mental health nurses across various care environments in the UK.)
NES. (Various publications). Frameworks for Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions. (NES has a strong track record of developing detailed competency frameworks for various specialisms, including mental health. Even if not directly from England, these are highly influential and methodologically sound.)
HEE. (Various publications). Competence Frameworks for the Mental Health Workforce. (HEE, particularly its Mental Health Programme, has led initiatives to develop competency frameworks across the mental health workforce, including nursing. Look for specific frameworks related to different roles or areas of mental health practice.)

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