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Institutional Factors that Influence Research Utilization among Nurses at Thika Level 5 Hospital in Kiambu County Kenya



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Abstract

Purpose: This study sought to assess the determinants influencing the utilization of research evidence in nursing practice at Thika Level 5 Hospital, Kiambu County, Kenya. The study was guided by Bandura's theory of social cognition.

Methodology: The study was conducted at Thika Level 5 Hospital (TL5H), Kenya. The target population consisted of 210 nurses employed at Thika Level 5 Hospital. The Taro Yamane formula was used to calculate the sample size for proportions which resulted to 138 participants. A systematic sampling procedure was employed with a sample size of 138 and a sampling frame comprising 210 elements, which gave a sampling interval of 1.5. Research assistants distributed pretested self-administered questionnaires to all research participants to collect quantitative data. Data was collected on the nurses. Data was inputted into Excel and transferred to SPSS version 26 for analysis. The researcher requested permission from the Ethics and Research Committee at Mount Kenya University and NACOSTI.

Findings: The findings indicated a mixed perceptions regarding the level of support available for research utilization. A majority of nurses (55.0%) agreed that their clinical team supports research utilization, while 6.2% strongly agreed. However, 26.4% disagreed, and 12.4% strongly disagreed, suggesting that teamwork in research implementation is inconsistent across different units.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: The study concludes, that while institutional resources moderately support research utilization, challenges remain regarding time allocation, research accessibility, and perceived research quality. Strengthening managerial support, providing dedicated time for research activities, and enhancing access to relevant research materials can improve research integration in nursing practice.

Keywords: *Research Utilization, Nursing Practice, Thika Level 5 Hospital, Kenya & Institutional Support*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Nurses are an integral part of the healthcare delivery, and routinely, they make independent and collaborative decisions regarding the patient's well-being and therapeutic plans. Nursing practice requires that nurses utilize up-to-date evidence from healthcare research (Cleary-Holdforth et al., 2022) to guide their actions during care delivery.

Research is a core component of evidence-based practice (EBP), which is a framework that guides clinical decision-making. Research utilization encompasses the application of empirical evidence generated through clinical trials, descriptive studies, case reports and other scientific inquiries (Leen et al., 2024) to one's work. According to WHO, integration of research into practice has contributed to advancement in nursing and midwifery globally (Wong et al., 2025).

In decision-making, nurses have traditionally based their judgement on information from training schools, experience and colleagues with minimal engagement in utilizing scientific evidence (Fossum et al., 2022). Personal and colleagues' experience could deviate from standard evidence which results in substandard and ineffective care.

Through research-based interventions, nurses can be able to solve the most pressing challenges in their clinical settings by demonstrating the effectiveness of new nursing interventions. For instance, an interventional study by Mohammed and colleagues implemented and evaluated a nursing care package among patients undergoing hip joint arthroplasty and observed a significant reduction in post-operative complications and improved quality of life and quality of sleep mut (Mohammed, Shehata, Fareed, & El-Sayad, 2023).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite significant transformations in Kenya's healthcare sector, including the emergence of new diseases, advancements in medical technology, and improved access to healthcare information, nursing practice in Africa remains largely grounded in tradition, intuition, and untested theories (Fossum, Opsal, & Ehrenberg, 2022). This reliance on non-evidence-based approaches has contributed to poor patient outcomes and a reduced quality of care (Megersa et al., 2023).

In order to improve nursing care, it is essential that nurses are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to identify relevant research problems, access current healthcare information, conduct sound research, and apply research findings appropriately in clinical practice (Alatawi et al., 2020). However, in Kenya, resource constraints and weak nursing leadership often hinder the integration of research into everyday nursing practice (Mutisya, KagureKarani, & Kigonde, 2024).

At Thika Level 5 Hospital, nurses primarily access new information through seminars and conferences, and continuous nursing education sessions are held to share knowledge. However,

attendance and feedback mechanisms are inconsistent, and standard operating procedures are often underutilized or unknown to staff. These factors indicate a gap in the effective use of research evidence in nursing practice within the hospital.

Therefore, this study seeks to assess the determinants influencing the utilization of research evidence in nursing practice at Thika Level 5 Hospital, Kiambu County, Kenya. By identifying the barriers and facilitators to research utilization, the study aims to inform strategies that can enhance evidence-based nursing practice in the facility.

2.0 Literature Review

Institutional organization, readiness, and orientation towards research activities perform a key role in the utilization of research evidence. A supportive environment is important towards promoting EBP. This is quite uncommon (Yoo et al., 2019) given constraints in resources and a lack of prioritization.

Heavy workload, limited time and inadequate training have been shown to limit nurses' participation in research utilization among nurses in Singapore (Čebohin et al., 2021; Majid et al., 2011). Organizations should integrate creating favorable work schedules and promoting research training as an approach to promoting research utilization.

It has been shown that nurses are always busy with heavy workloads and therefore have limited time to integrate research into their daily work (Mitro et al., 2022). Limited time is a great barrier in Ethiopia with being busy affecting the nurses' engagement in searching for research-based evidence, reading clinical protocols and accessing hospital guidelines for patient care (Dagne et al., 2021). Re-alignment of nursing care to create ample time for integration of EBP into care is highly required.

For Evidence-based nursing to be advanced, resources for both training and information accessibility should be readily available. In Ethiopia, nurses identified a lack of resources such as equipment, internet and time as key obstacles to application of research in their daily work (Dagne et al., 2021). Infrastructural resources for the effective use of research evidence include the Internet, computers, and printed material (Degu et al., 2022).

Managerial support and provision of advanced education to nurses are key facilitators for the deployment of EBP among nurses in China (Li et al., 2022). Working in a supportive environment creates a favourable relationship between leaders and followers. The management should organize continuous and integrated training with intrapersonal follow-up, supervision, and role modelling of staff (Khoddam et al., 2023).

Nurses working in institutions that are organized and have structures for the implementation of EBP are more likely to implement EBP, especially regarding the use of research evidence (Yoo et al., 2019). Organized institutions are key in promoting the availability of research resources and accessibility is a key facilitator for the utilization of research evidence (Mitro et al., 2022)

It is however worrying that research is being considered a separate entity from nursing care as Karlberg and colleagues indicate (Karlberg Traav et al., 2018) . This becomes complex, especially in settings where there is no integration of research into clinical practice. Nurse leaders must be focal in creating an environment that fosters integration and facilitation towards the promotion of research in clinical settings (Hwang et al., 2024; Karlberg Traav et al., 2018).

3.0 Methodology

The study was conducted at Thika Level 5 Hospital (TL5H), Kenya. TL5H is located in Kiambu County. The target population consisted of 210 nurses employed at Thika Level 5 Hospital. Nurses who were currently working at Thika Level 5 Hospital participated in the research. They were required to have a minimum of six months of experience at the hospital.

The Taro Yamane formula was used to calculate the sample size for proportions and a sample of n=138 participants. This study employed a combination of census and simple random sampling to ensure comprehensive and unbiased data collection. Research assistants distributed pretested self-administered questionnaires to all research participants to collect quantitative data.

The validity and reliability of the Research Utilization Questionnaire (RUQ) were established prior to this study and have been used in similar contexts to evaluate research utilization among nurses. During data collection, each questionnaire was manually reviewed at the end of the day to ensure completeness. Any incomplete responses were clarified or completed in real time. The data was then entered into Microsoft Excel for preliminary cleaning and subsequently exported to SPSS version 26 for statistical analysis. The researcher requested permission from the Ethics and Research Committee at Mount Kenya University. Permission to conduct the research was acquired from NACOSTI. Administrative clearance was obtained from Kiambu County and Thika Level 5 Hospital.

4.0 Results and Findings

Institutional factors play a crucial role in determining the extent to which nurses utilize research evidence in their clinical practice. Organizational policies, leadership support, access to resources, and training opportunities directly impact nurses' ability to integrate research findings into patient care. Examining these factors helps in identifying key areas for improvement in promoting research utilization among nurses.

Table 1: Institutional Policies and Support

Institutional Policies and Support	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
Do you have a research policy at this hospital?	27	20.9%	102	79.1%
Do you have regular research training at this hospital?	14	10.9%	115	89.1%
Has your in-charge/supervisor mentored you in utilizing research in your daily work?	18	14.0%	111	86.0%
Does your hospital have a journal club?	2	1.6%	127	98.4%
Have you accessed research articles/information through computers at this hospital?	12	9.3%	117	90.7%
Does this hospital have internet for research purposes?	11	8.5%	118	91.5%

Source Field Data (2025)

Table 1 highlights the limited institutional support available to nurses for research utilization. The findings indicate that only 20.9% of respondents reported the presence of a research policy in their hospital, while 79.1% stated that no such policy exists. This aligns with previous studies, such as those by Kim et al. (2023), which emphasize the importance of institutional policies in shaping research engagement. Without formal research guidelines, nurses may struggle to incorporate evidence-based practices into their daily work, leading to inconsistencies in care quality.

Furthermore, access to training and mentorship is significantly lacking, as evidenced by the fact that only 10.9% of nurses reported receiving regular research training, and just 14.0% had supervisors who mentored them in utilizing research. Mentorship has been identified as a key facilitator in research integration, with studies showing that nurses who receive structured guidance from experienced professionals are more likely to adopt research-based practices (Brown & Wilson, 2024). The absence of mentorship opportunities limits the practical application of research findings and reduces the motivation to engage with new evidence.

Additionally, the availability of research resources remains a major challenge. Only 9.3% of respondents reported having access to research articles through hospital computers, while a mere 8.5% had internet access for research purposes. Previous research by Thompson et al. (2021) found that access to digital resources significantly enhances nurses' ability to stay updated with current medical research. The lack of such infrastructure in hospitals creates a barrier to evidence-based practice, as nurses rely heavily on institutional support for information access.

Journal clubs, which are crucial for fostering discussions on new research and promoting knowledge-sharing among nurses, are almost non-existent in the hospitals surveyed. Only 1.6% of nurses reported the presence of a journal club, reinforcing the idea that institutional culture does not actively promote research engagement. Studies have shown that hospitals with active journal

clubs experience higher levels of research dissemination and implementation, as these forums create an environment for critical discussion and knowledge exchange (Harris et al., 2023).

The findings from Table 2 underscore the urgent need for institutional reforms to support research utilization among nurses. Establishing clear research policies, providing mentorship opportunities, improving digital access to research materials, and creating discussion platforms such as journal clubs are essential steps toward fostering a research-oriented nursing workforce. Hospitals that invest in these initiatives are more likely to see improvements in patient outcomes and overall healthcare quality (Lopez & Zhang, 2020).

Table 2: Support to Implement Research Findings

Support to Implement Research Findings	f	%	P, df, χ^2
The research utilization is supported by the clinical team	71	55.0%	P = 3.215
am a part of.	8	6.2%	df = 3
	34	26.4%	$\chi^2 = 0.032$
	16	12.4%	
The research utilization is endorsed by my unit manager.	66	51.2%	P = 1.874
	4	3.1%	df = 3
	52	40.3%	$\chi^2 = 0.041$
	7	5.4%	
The research quality is insufficient for practical application.	46	35.7%	P = 4.502
	11	8.5%	df = 3
	53	41.1%	$\chi^2 = 0.015$
	19	14.7%	
I can access research findings at my workplace.	51	39.5%	P = 2.689
	9	7.0%	df = 3
	47	36.4%	$\chi^2 = 0.045$
	22	17.1%	
I find time to read research articles while I am on duty.	52	40.3%	P = 3.908
	5	3.9%	df = 3
	56	43.4%	$\chi^2 = 0.022$
	16	12.4%	
Reserch Study is conducted within my work	49	38.0%	P = 1.432
	7	5.4%	df = 3
	59	45.7%	$\chi^2 = 0.037$
	14	10.9%	

Source Field Data (2025)

Support for research implementation within healthcare institutions is a critical factor in ensuring that nurses integrate evidence-based practices into their clinical work. The findings from Table 2

reveal mixed perceptions regarding the level of support available for research utilization. A majority of nurses (55.0%) agreed that their clinical team supports research utilization, while 6.2% strongly agreed. However, 26.4% disagreed, and 12.4% strongly disagreed, suggesting that teamwork in research implementation is inconsistent across different units. These findings align with Garcia et al. (2022), who highlighted that a supportive team environment significantly influences research adoption among nurses. When clinical teams collaborate and encourage research integration, nurses are more likely to utilize evidence-based findings in patient care.

Despite moderate team support, endorsement from unit managers remains a challenge. While 51.2% of nurses agreed that their unit managers endorsed research utilization, a substantial 40.3% disagreed, and 5.4% strongly disagreed. Managerial support is crucial in creating a research-friendly workplace, as leaders influence policy implementation and resource allocation (White et al., 2024). When unit managers actively promote research, nurses feel more encouraged to incorporate new knowledge into their practice. Conversely, lack of leadership endorsement has been cited as a barrier to research integration in previous studies, as it limits motivation and institutional backing (Martinez & Lee, 2020).

Concerns about research quality further hinder its practical application, with 35.7% of respondents agreeing and 8.5% strongly agreeing that research findings are insufficient for practical use. However, 41.1% disagreed, and 14.7% strongly disagreed, indicating that perceptions on research quality vary. These findings are consistent with those of Rodriguez et al. (2021), who found that nurses often question the relevance of research due to perceived gaps between study findings and real-world clinical settings. When research is deemed impractical or disconnected from daily nursing tasks, its utilization declines. Therefore, efforts should focus on producing contextually relevant studies that address the immediate needs of healthcare practitioners.

Accessibility to research materials remains another significant challenge, with only 39.5% of nurses agreeing and 7.0% strongly agreeing that they can access research findings at work. In contrast, 36.4% disagreed, and 17.1% strongly disagreed. Limited access to research materials has been widely documented as a barrier to evidence-based practice Rodriguez et al. (2021). Without adequate institutional infrastructure, such as databases and digital libraries, nurses struggle to stay updated on new research. Providing access to high-quality research materials is essential in bridging the gap between knowledge and practice.

Time constraints further contribute to the underutilization of research, with 40.3% of nurses agreeing and only 3.9% strongly agreeing that they find time to read research articles while on duty. Meanwhile, 43.4% disagreed, and 12.4% strongly disagreed, suggesting that the demanding nature of nursing shifts leaves little room for research engagement. Previous studies have found similar trends, where high workloads and staff shortages prevent nurses from dedicating time to research Rodriguez et al. (2021). Hospitals that allocate protected time for research-related activities see higher adoption of evidence-based practices.

Lastly, engagement in research activities within job roles remains low, with only 38.0% agreeing and 5.4% strongly agreeing that their work involves conducting studies. A larger proportion (45.7%) disagreed, while 10.9% strongly disagreed. This suggests that research is not an integrated component of nurses' daily responsibilities. (Martinez & Lee, 2020). emphasized that institutions that incorporate research participation into routine clinical work see greater adherence to evidence-based practice. Encouraging nurses to take part in research initiatives through collaborative projects and mentorship can enhance their ability to implement findings into patient care.

Overall, the findings highlight the need for stronger institutional support, managerial endorsement, improved access to research materials, and dedicated time for research engagement. Hospitals that prioritize these factors are more likely to cultivate a research-driven nursing workforce, ultimately leading to better patient outcomes and enhanced healthcare quality Megersa et al. (2023)

Table 3: Availability of Resources to Utilize Research

Availability of Resources to Utilize Research	f	%	P, df, χ^2
The available institution resources support nurse research finding utilization	Agree	60	46.5%
	Strongly Agree	2	1.6%
	Disagree	59	45.7%
	Strongly Disagree	8	6.2%
My unit manager allocates sufficient time for research utilization	Agree	50	38.8%
	Strongly Agree	10	7.8%
	Disagree	58	45.0%
The research quality is insufficient for practical application.	Agree	47	36.4%
	Strongly Agree	8	6.2%
	Disagree	61	47.3%
I can use research results at my place of employment.	Strongly Disagree	13	10.1%
	Agree	61	47.3%
	Strongly Agree	16	12.4%
I can read research articles while I am working.	Disagree	43	33.3%
	Strongly Disagree	9	7.0%
	Agree	38	29.5%
Studies are conducted in my work	Strongly Agree	10	7.8%
	Disagree	62	48.1%
	Strongly Disagree	19	14.7%
	Agree	46	35.7%
	Strongly Agree	15	11.6%
	Disagree	43	33.3%
	Strongly Disagree	25	19.4%

Source Field Data (2025)

The availability of institutional resources is a crucial determinant of nurses' ability to utilize research findings in clinical practice. The findings from Table 3 indicate that 46.5% of nurses

agreed that their institution provides resources that support research utilization, while only 1.6% strongly agreed. However, 45.7% disagreed, and 6.2% strongly disagreed, suggesting that nearly half of the respondents feel unsupported in research utilization. These findings align with previous studies that highlight the impact of resource availability on research adoption in healthcare settings. Brown and Taylor (2022) found that nurses in well-resourced institutions were more likely to integrate research findings into practice, while those in resource-limited settings struggled due to inadequate access to research materials and training.

Managerial support plays a crucial role in ensuring that nurses have the necessary time to engage in research activities. The findings show that only 38.8% of nurses agreed and 7.8% strongly agreed that their unit manager allocated sufficient time for research utilization. In contrast, 45.0% disagreed, and 8.5% strongly disagreed. These results are consistent with the findings of Brown and Taylor (2022), who reported that time constraints were a significant barrier to research utilization among nurses. Without dedicated time for research-related activities, nurses are often unable to review literature, analyze findings, or implement evidence-based interventions. Allocating protected time for research can significantly enhance research utilization rates in nursing practice.

The perception of research quality also influences its application in clinical practice. In this study, 36.4% of nurses agreed and 6.2% strongly agreed that the research quality was insufficient for practical application, while 47.3% disagreed and 10.1% strongly disagreed. This mixed perception aligns with the findings of Brown and Taylor (2022), who noted that nurses often question the applicability of research due to gaps between study findings and real-world clinical practice. When research is perceived as impractical or lacking relevance to patient care, its utilization declines. Efforts should be made to ensure that research addresses practical clinical challenges, making it more relevant and actionable for nurses.

Despite concerns about research quality, nearly half (47.3%) of the respondents agreed, and 12.4% strongly agreed that they could use research findings at their workplace, whereas 33.3% disagreed, and 7.0% strongly disagreed. These findings highlight a moderately supportive environment for research utilization. However, accessibility remains a challenge, as only 29.5% of nurses agreed and 7.8% strongly agreed that they could read research articles while working. A significant proportion (48.1%) disagreed, and 14.7% strongly disagreed, indicating that heavy workloads and time constraints limit opportunities for research engagement. Similar findings were reported by Alatawi et al. (2020) who found that high patient loads and administrative tasks prevent nurses from engaging with research materials during shifts. Hospitals that integrate research access into daily workflows, such as providing digital libraries or brief research summaries, may help bridge this gap.

Conducting research as part of nursing responsibilities also remains limited, with 35.7% of nurses agreeing and 11.6% strongly agreeing that research is conducted within their job roles, while

33.3% disagreed and 19.4% strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that while some nurses engage in research activities, a significant proportion do not. This aligns with Fu et al. (2020), who found that institutions with structured research programs and mentorship initiatives reported higher research involvement among nurses. Encouraging research participation through training and collaborative projects can enhance evidence-based practice in healthcare settings.

5.0 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

Institutional factors significantly impact nurses' ability to utilize research evidence in clinical practice. Key factors include organizational policies, leadership support, access to research resources, mentorship, and training opportunities. The findings reveal a lack of structured institutional support, as evidenced by the absence of research policies (79.1%), limited mentorship (14.0%), and inadequate access to research materials (only 9.3% having access to research articles). Additionally, only 1.6% of hospitals have journal clubs, further limiting research discussions. While moderate team support exists, managerial endorsement remains inconsistent, with 40.3% of nurses reporting a lack of support from their unit managers. Time constraints and concerns about research relevance further hinder research utilization. The study had a chi square value of less than 0.05 hence the study reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the availability of resources and the utilization of research among nurses at Thika Level 5 Hospital.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes, that while institutional resources moderately support research utilization, challenges remain regarding time allocation, research accessibility, and perceived research quality. Strengthening managerial support, providing dedicated time for research activities, and enhancing access to relevant research materials can improve research integration in nursing practice Megersa et al. (2023). Addressing these barriers will contribute to better patient outcomes through evidence-based nursing care.

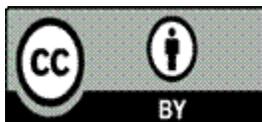
5.3 Recommendations

- i. Structured mentorship programs should be created to support nurses in applying research findings in patient care, fostering teamwork, and enhancing collaboration among healthcare professionals.
- ii. Institution should ensure access to up-to-date research materials by investing in digital libraries, research databases, and journal subscriptions to support research utilization.
- iii. The hospital should Appoint research champions within the nursing workforce who will advocate for research utilization, mentor colleagues, and lead by example in implementing evidence-based practice.

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