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**Titolo tesi: The correlation between Professional Competencies and Self-Efficacy between Nursing Students and Registered Nurses**

### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Possessing a high level of expertise among all healthcare professionals is the new demand in the rapid development and complexity of international healthcare systems. Competence as a concept is complex to define; it has led to controversy and confusion in nursing as a profession oriented to clinical and professional practice. However, it is essential to ensure qualified and affordable health care and have skills appropriate to every nurse's role in health care settings. Competence is a topic of great interest to educators and administrators in practical disciplines, particularly in healthcare fields such as nursing. Nursing expertise is currently seen as central to patient care outcomes, and its importance goes far beyond the domain of regulation and licensing. Nursing competencies include the basic competencies, skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to perform the nurse role, as nursing requires complex combinations of knowing, knowing how to do and knowing how to be. Professional competence is necessary for providing nursing care based on professional standards. Therefore, nursing education plays an essential role in training professionals to contribute to the overall health and safety of the care provided. Nursing training is essential in assessing and applying professional skills in registered nurses and nursing students during clinical practice. According to some authors, an important role plays self-efficacy in positively influencing the professional competence of registered nursing and nursing students, but further studies have yet to focus on the relationship between professional competence and self-efficacy.

**Aim:** The main aim of this thesis has been the psychometric validation of an Italian translation of the Nurse Professional Competence Scale Short Form (I-NPCS-SF) in the Italian context, testing its validity and reliability. Furthermore, the studies explored the perceptions of competencies in registered nurses and nursing students and investigated their differences in professional nursing competence

development. Finally, this thesis aimed to examine professional competence and its association with self-efficacy among undergraduates and registered nurses.

**Methodology:** In the first study, a multiphase design was used for the I-NPCS-SF: (1) cultural and linguistic validation, (2) content and face validity and, (3) construct validity. In the second study, a cross-sectional observational study design was accomplished. Finally, in the third study, a cross-sectional, correlational investigation was conducted through a two-questionnaire-based survey.

**Conclusions:** The results of this thesis highlighted the implications for nursing, graduate education, research, management, and clinical practice. We have psychometrically validated and evaluated the Italian scale for the evaluation of professional competencies. Furthermore, in comparing the two scales, I-NPCS-SF and NPSES have shown no direct correlation between self-efficacy and professional competence. Therefore, self-efficacy is not linked to the relationship between registered nurses and nursing students in developing their professionalism and competence. The studies highlighted the importance of close collaboration between the university system and the world of work, therefore learning for university education, which could influence training programs to acquire self-efficacy and professional competence. In conclusion, future research on professional competencies in nursing could provide guidance to assess and define nurses' competencies.

**Keywords:** Clinical Practice, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Linguistic Validation, Nursing Competencies, Nursing Education, Observational Study, Professional Competence, Registered Nurses , Self-efficacy, Undergraduates.