



Peer-Reviewed Article

Examination of the Certification System for Library and Information Professionals: A Comparison of the Certified Professional Librarian and Nursing Systems in Japan

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ABSTRACT

Certification systems for library and information professionals act as evidence of knowledge and skills, playing an important role in improving skills through continuing professional development (CPD). As such, the design of certification requirements and educational systems is crucial. This study compares the Certified Professional Librarian (CPL) in Japan with the certification system for nurses and clarifies the differences in certification requirements and educational methods through a qualitative content analysis of the literature. The certification requirements and educational methods for Certified Nurse Specialist (CNS), Certified Nurse (CN), and Certified Nurse Administrator (CNA) were clarified. The implications for the CPL system were identified as follows: (1) a system that facilitates selection based on specialization, (2) difference in requirements for new and renewal certification, and (3) collaboration with educational institutions for curriculum organization.

KEYWORDS

Librarian, Certification System, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Certified Professional Librarian, Japan

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Introduction

Background

In Japan, a librarian license (shisho) is a professional qualification for library and information professionals. It can be obtained by completing the designated courses within a bachelor's degree or attending a training course, as prescribed by a Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) ordinance (MEXT, 2024). As of 2022, 21,520 librarians were employed in public libraries across the country (Education Policy Bureau, MEXT, 2022).

Unfortunately, the status of librarian licenses in Japan is not high. According to a survey by the Japan Library Association (JLA, 2024a), the librarian licenses are held by only 52% of public library full-time staff in Japan. Moreover, the librarian license is not internationally valid. Minai (2005) pointed out problems of librarian licenses. Licenses can be obtained by attending a training course or earning credits at universities and there is no final exam. While in Japan, most professionals undergo national or other license examinations. Therefore, there are disparities in the abilities of those who hold librarian licenses.

According to Imano et al. (1995), the effects of licenses include the fact that they are certificates of occupational ability and, thus, play a role in promoting the development of workers' abilities, as well as protect and improve the professional interests of license holders. Furthermore, they state that Japan's licensing system can be divided into ability licenses and business monopoly licenses. Aoyagi (2020) classified librarians as having competence licenses and doctors, lawyers, certified public accountants, among others having as business monopoly licenses, based on the classification of Imano et al. (1995).

The certification system for librarians in Japan was recommended in the "Report on Measures to Improve the Training and Training of Social Education Officers, Curators, and Librarians" (1998) published by the Social Education Subcommittee Council in the Lifelong Learning Council, one of the councils of the MEXT. In response to these recommendations, the Japan Library Association (JLA) designed and implemented the Certificated Professional Librarian (CPL, Ninte Shisho) certification in 2010. Otani (2022) pointed out measuring knowledge and skills externally was difficult, which was why librarians had low social recognition. The CPL adopted a system of objective evaluation and aimed to demonstrate that people with solid abilities could be seen as convincing even from outside. Miyahara (2022) stated that there are two types of certifications for library and information professionals today: "educational certification," which certifies educational programs, as in the United States, and "professional certification," which certifies individuals, as in the Philippines. Japan's CPL system is based on the latter case.

Certification systems for library and information professionals provide evidence of the knowledge and skills certified professionals possess. They also play an important role in

enhancing skills as continuous professional development (CPD). The design of certification requirements and educational systems is of paramount importance, as it directly affects the type of knowledge, skills, and experience developed by library and information professionals. This study thus focuses on the CPL certification system for library and information professionals.

Literature Review

This section reviews previous studies on CPLs and other certification systems for library and information professionals. As there are few articles on this topic, practical reports have also been reviewed.

Matsumoto and Uchiyama (2023) conducted interviews with certified professional librarians to clarify their perceptions of four points: (1) the motivation for applying for the certification, (2) their expectations of becoming a certified librarian and the reality of it, (3) how they perceive certified librarians as library staff, and (4) issues with the system. The four main issues identified were: (1) the lack of clarity regarding the skills of certified librarians, (2) the fact that the requirements for certification are not always provided in an easily understandable format, (3) the lack of sufficient efforts to improve recognition, and (4) the need for more initiatives to make better use of CPLs.

Matsumoto (2019) conducted a comparative analysis of the certification system for CPL in Japan, contrasting it with those in the UK, New Zealand, and Australia. The identified differences encompassed the following characteristics of the system in Japan: (1) the absence of registration as a prerequisite for certification, (2) a smaller number of certified individuals, (3) the lack of an international compatibility system, (4) no requirement for association membership, (5) restriction to public librarians, (6) a limited emphasis on reflection, (7) the absence of a defined body of knowledge, (8) a lack of substantial support systems. He hypothesized that these characteristics were the result of the following factors: The JLA was established as a result of the Lifelong Learning Council's report. Consequently, the target became public librarians (5). As the target was librarians under Library Law, there was no need to create a knowledge base (7). In addition, the association did not try to monopolize the certification system (4), and its involvement was thus relatively low (8). Furthermore, as there was no other system to emulate, the certification system was established through trial and error, and the certification criteria were set relatively strictly to prove high levels of expertise. Objectivity was emphasized in the certification process and CPD became relatively weak. As a result, the number of certified individuals is limited (2). This has also led to the lack of a registration system (1). Furthermore, system design is not sufficiently based on learning theories such as self-reflection (6).

Broady-Preston and Cossham (2011) compared and evaluated the certified schemes offered by CILIP and LIANZA, both of which require achievements in training and research (CPD). Furthermore, the authors evaluated the role and significance of CPD schemes for the information profession, based on the experiences within their respective countries.

While not specifically focused on certification systems, Nemoto et al. (2013) drew comparisons between librarians and other professions and their respective professional systems. Specifically, they analyzed the establishment process of dietitians and clinical psychologists, with the objective of clarifying the professional status of librarians. Their study identified six common points, including the necessity for “continuous efforts to improve the qualification system;” all these aspects are insufficiently addressed within the field of librarianship.

As for practical reports, Martindale (2017) reported on CILIP’s Professional Registration and on the activities of CILIP’s Professional Registration and Accreditation Board (PRAB). The CILIP provides certification systems named ACLIP, MCLIP, and FCLIP (Associate, Chartered Member and Fellow of CILIP). Itoga (2015) reported that 100 CPLs in Japan have been born in the last five years, as “the past and future of the CPL system.” The CILIP introduced system in the UK, with Chartership being equivalent to the Japan CPL; under both systems, there is a scheme in which revalidation (renewal) is carried out after a certain amount of time. He pointed out the CPL system had reached the stage where it had been in place for five years, and that there are no CPL who had been “revalidated (renewaled).”

Sakai (2003) provided insights into the system and educational programs designed for health science information professionals, with a focus on the American Medical Library Association (MLA). Her research resulted in the establishment of current JMLA Health Sciences Information Professional (JHIP) certification system (<https://jmla1927.org/healthscience.php>). Kitagawa (2022) introduced the JHIP certification system. This system has three levels of credentials—Basic, Senior, and Distinguished—based on self-reporting, which includes professional activity points. The implementation of this credential system is stipulated in the association’s professional development program, in which credential levels are connected to the development program’s achievements.

In sum, previous studies have conducted comprehensive examinations of certification systems for library and information professionals both within and outside Japan. However, there is an absence of comparative analyses of these systems with those of other professions. While other professions have amassed a substantial corpus of studies evaluating certified professionals, interdisciplinary analyses extending beyond the library and information professional framework remain scarce.

Based on the literature, the following issues with the CPL system can be identified: (1) as Matsumoto and Uchiyama (2023) pointed out, there is a need for a system that clarifies who is capable of doing what. (2) According to Sakai (2003) and Kitagawa (2022), the JMLA Health Sciences Information Professional system is related to education, meaning that collaborating with the education system may ensure quality in the profession. (3) Itoga (2015) pointed out that the renewal certification system had not in use at the time of writing, but the CPL system began in

2010, and as of 2020, certified librarians will be created through renewal. However, as discussed below, the requirements for renewal are the same, but are they appropriate?

Research Subject

In this study, the nursing profession was chosen for comparison with librarians. From a professional perspective, Roos (2000) cited librarians and nurses as semi-professional occupations; however, in Japan they cannot be recognized as same-level professional occupations. Uzawa (2016) conducted a questionnaire survey of professional occupations by asking people to choose which of 63 professions they considered to be a profession, including doctors, lawyers, librarians, and registered nurses, and found that 23.9% of respondents chose librarians (64.2% chose doctors and 60.0% chose lawyers). Registered nurses scored 49.0%. As such, she concluded that occupations requiring qualifications through national examinations are recognized as professions. Because the actions of industry groups may influence the emergence of such distinctions, nurses were chosen as the focus of the survey. Utilizing certification systems of organizations that emphasize professional identity may also enhance the recognition of librarianship as a profession.

From the perspective of certification systems, (1) the certification requirements and the roles of certified professionals can be verified externally through regulations and guidelines. (2) Certification is part of a lifelong learning system and is regarded as a valuable means of developing professional competence. (3) The certification system for nursing in Japan was recommended in the Report of the Nursing System Study Group by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW, 1987) and, in response, the Japanese Nursing Association (JNA, Nihon Kango Kyokai), as the relevant organization, designed and implemented the certification system for nursing (Hasegawa, 2022). (4) JNA operates a comprehensive certification system. This contrasts with other fields, such as medicine and pharmacy, where certification systems for various departments and specialties are managed by different academic societies. (5) As the system is already well established, research is being conducted on those who have already been certified.

For example, Kamisaka et al. (2010) conducted a questionnaire survey on the activities of the Certified Nurse (CN), CN support systems, and the cognition of the activity and application of CNs among other CNs, nursing administrators, and nurses in general. The administrators on their part expressed their high regard for the CNs' functions. The suggested measures for supporting CNs included guaranteeing fixed work times and places, promotion, information activity, and sending CNs to other facilities as lecturers. Of the CNs, 73.5% were chiefs or held positions higher than those of the chief, and 79.4% worked not only as CNs but also as general staff members. Among all CNs, 44.1% spent less than two hours per day working as CNs.

Baba et al. (2013) conducted a questionnaire survey of certified nurse specialists (CNS), with questions on work environment, job satisfaction, and basic attributes. An analysis of the answers collected on job position showed that the percentage of managers was 43.1% and the

percentage of nurses who normally worked overtime for more than 50 hours a month was 19.6%. The average number of points for job satisfaction was 89.8 out of 125, with a range of plus/minus 10.5 points. Nurses with five years or more years of experience as CNS had significantly higher job satisfaction than those with less than 5 years of experience. Nurses who were also hospital managers, given time off in lieu, expected to perform CNS, or given sufficient power to perform their duties had significantly higher job satisfaction than those without these characteristics.

Therefore, the certification system was designed based on previous studies and the nursing system is relatively similar in its design and implementation history to that of librarians.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to compare the certification systems for the Japanese nurses with CPL and to examine how the system contributes to the three issues discussed in the previous section by clarifying the differences in certification requirements and educational methods.

Methodology

A qualitative content analysis of the rules of the certification system was conducted on the website of the organization that designed the system. This study analyzed CPL and nurse certification systems in Japan by focusing on two key points:

(1) Contents of the Certification System: certification frameworks, specializations, and requirements were surveyed by website. The JLA (<https://www.jla.or.jp/>) website was surveyed for the CPL system, and the JNA (<https://www.nurse.or.jp/>) website was surveyed for the nurse system. When implementing certification, rules are written in the regulations and bylaws to ensure fair assessment. Furthermore, the literature on the design and review of the nurse certification systems was analyzed (see “Contents of the Certification System”).

(2) Educational Methods: frameworks, specializations, and curricula of education programs, which were a requirement of the certification system, were surveyed by website. Given the absence of mandatory educational programs in the CPL, the analysis primarily focused on nurse’s programs. The JNA website and the Japanese Association of Nursing Programs in Universities (JANPU, <https://www.janpu.or.jp/>) website was surveyed. (see “Educational Methods”).

Moreover, potential for the enhancements of the CPL system (certification requirements and education programs) with regard to the nurse system was explored. The results of the survey are as of March 2024.

Contents of the Certification System

The JNA oversees three distinct certification systems: Certified Nurse Specialist (CNS), Certified Nurse (CN), and Certified Nurse Administrator (CNA). These three systems are not hierarchically related and certify distinct specializations.

The CNS and CNA certification systems were recommended in the 1987 Report of the Nursing System Study Group. In the United States, where the system was created, advanced practice nurses are required to have completed a postgraduate degree. In Japan, the decision was made that CNS, equivalent to advanced practice nurses, attend a postgraduate master's course. Conversely, given that a considerable proportion of nurses in Japan graduate from technical colleges, the CN system was designed with the recognition that there was also a need to train other specialized nurses (Japan Society of Nursing History, 2013). These circumstances have resulted in the coexistence of the three certification systems. The certification period for each system is five years. To maintain a certified status, renewal certification must be obtained before the expiration of the certification period.

Under both CN, CNS, and CNA certification systems, the new certification is based on the following three requirements: (1) practical experience in nursing and practical training, (2) completion of a training program or educational course, and (3) passing a written examination. In both certification systems, renewal certification is based on the following two requirements: (1) 2,000 hours of practice or administration experience in nursing and (2) engaging in a designated number of professional activities (called "achievements in training and research" or "self-improvement"). Professional activities such as attending training courses, writing a paper, lecturing, and engaging in social activities shall be detailed in the conversion chart and translated into points.

The summary of the certification systems explained in the next section is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of the certification systems

	Certified Professional Librarian (CPL)	Certified Nurse Specialist (CNS)	Certified Nurse (CN)	Certified Nurse Administrator (CNA)
Roles	core of library management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practice • consultation • coordination • ethical coordination • education • research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practice • coaching • consultation 	nursing administration
Year of establishment	2010	1994	1995	1998
Number of certified individuals	166	3,155	23,260	5,001

Main new certification requirements	Training /Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years of work experience • 5 years of work experience in a public library • self-improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of practical training • 3 years specifically of practical training in the field of specialized nursing • master's degree in nursing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of practical training • 3 years specifically of practical training in the field of specialized nursing • completion of CN education courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of work experience • 3 years of experience in nursing administration • third level of the NA education courses
	Writing articles	written works	none	none	none
	Education courses	none	CNS education courses	CN education courses	NA education courses
Period of certification	10 years			5 years	
Main renewal certification requirements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of work experience • self-improvement • works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2000 hours of practical experience • achievements in training and research 100pt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2000 hours of practical experience • self-improvement 50pt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2000 hours of nursing administration • self-improvement 50pt.

Certified Professional Librarian (CPL)

According to the CPL Project Committee Regulations (JLA, 2018), the CPL certification “assesses the high level of professionalism of a librarian” and someone who holds this certification is defined as a person who has been recognized as having “continuously acquired work experience and practical knowledge and skills essential to the professional development of a librarian and who can play a central role in the management of public libraries.”

According to the CPL Review Guidelines (JLA, 2022), The following requirements are stipulated in the new application: (1) hold a librarian license, (2) have at least 10 years of work experience in a library (converted to full-time), (3) have at least 5 years of work experience in a public library (converted to full-time), (4) engage in a designated number of “self-improvement” activities within the past 10 years, (5) contributed written “works” within the past 10 years, and (6) have not violated the Code of Ethics for Librarians approved at the Annual General Conference of JLA

(<https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/13728292/www.jla.or.jp/portals/o/html/ethics-e.html>).

“Self-improvement” and written “works” are detailed in the CPL Review Agreements (JLA, 2019). Experience in “self-improvement” activities such as attending training courses, lecturing, and engaging in social activities are detailed in the rules and translated into points, with a minimum of 20 points required. “Works” in this context refer to literature that contributes to library management, and the total number of words in a single or multiple works (up to three) is at least 8,000. These works include an original piece written for the application, a book, journal article, thesis, and report published within the past 10 years. The CPL Review Agreement also emphasizes that the text must exhibit logical consistency and mere case studies of the library where the applicants work will not be accepted as works of authorship.

Certifications are valid for 10 years and must be renewed within this timeframe to maintain CPL status. According to the CPL Review Guidelines, the following requirements are stipulated in the renewal application: (1) certified as CPL, (2) have at least 5 years of work experience in a public library since being certified as a CPL (converted to full-time), (3) engage in a designated number of “self-improvement” activities since being certified as a CPL, (4) contributed written “works” since being certified as a CPL, and (5) have not violated the Code of Ethics for Librarians since being certified as a CPL.

Both new and renewal applications are assessed by the certified review board of CPL. The certified review board assesses the work experience and “self-improvement” based on the documents submitted by the applicant and the “works” based on the literature. The decision to grant or deny certification is made based on this examination process.

Certified Nurse Specialist (CNS)

According to the CNS Regulations (JNA, 2021a), CNS is defined as “individuals who have passed the CNS certified review and are acknowledged as possessing exceptional nursing practice competence in a specific area of specialized nursing.” The six pivotal roles to be fulfilled are as follows: (1) “practice”: practices nursing excellence with individuals, families, and populations in the field of specialized nursing; (2) “consultation”: provides consultation to care providers, including nurses, in the field of specialized nursing; (3) “coordination”: coordinates between people involved in health and social care to facilitate the delivery of necessary care in the field of specialized nursing; (4) “ethical coordination”: resolves ethical issues and conflicts to protect the rights of individuals, families, and groups in the field of specialized nursing; (5) “education”: performs an educational function for nurses to improve care in the field of specialized nursing; and (6) “research”: conducts research activities to improve and develop professional knowledge and skills in the field of specialized nursing.

There are 14 specialized nursing fields, including cancer nursing, psychiatric nursing, and community nursing, with the number of CNS is 3,155 (as of December 2022). The following requirements are stipulated in the new application: (1) hold a nurse’s license in Japan, (2) complete a master’s degree in nursing with requisite credits from a CNS education course, (3)

have at least 5 years of practical training, (4) have at least three years of practical training in the field of specialized nursing.

Practical training in a specialized field is mandatory, following the standards of JNA (2022a) For example, in cancer nursing, the requirement stipulates that “at least half of the work must be dedicated to cancer nursing”. According to the certification guide (JNA, 2023a), a written examination is conducted after a documentary review to confirm the requirements. Individuals who pass the examination are certified as CNS.

Certifications are valid for five years and must be renewed within this timeframe to maintain CNS status. According to the CNS Regulations, the following requirements are stipulated in the renewal application: (1) certified as CNS, (2) have the designated nursing “practical experience” within the past five years, (3) have the designated “achievements in training and research” within the past five years.

“Practical experience” and “achievements in training and research” are detailed in the CNS Bylaws (JNA, 2021a). “Practical experience” requires at least 2,000 hours working as a CNS, while “achievements in training and research” refers to activities such as attending training courses, writing a paper, lecturing, and engaging in social activities (JNA, 2022b) and are translated into points, with a minimum total of 100 points required.

Certified Nurse (CN)

According to the CN System Regulations (JNA, 2020a), CNs are defined as “nurses certified by the JNA, possessing proficient nursing skills and knowledge in a specialized nursing field.” The three pivotal roles to be fulfilled are as follows: (1) practice: a high standard of nursing care for individuals, families, and groups in a specific nursing discipline, using skilled nursing skills and knowledge based on high levels of clinical reasoning and pathological judgment; (2) coaching: provides guidance to nursing professionals in a specific nursing discipline through nursing practice; and (3) consultation: provides consultation to nursing professionals and others in a specific nursing discipline.

As of March 2024, CN can choose between two types of programs: Program B, which includes specified medical acts, and Program A, which does not. This paper details Program B because Program A will end in 2029 (JNA, 2024). According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW, 2023), “specific medical acts” are defined as “aids to medical treatment, which, when performed by nurses according to a written procedure, particularly require practical comprehension, thinking, and judgment, and advanced and specialized knowledge and skills.”

There are 19 specialized nursing fields, such as infection control, and the number of CNs is 23,260 (as of December 2022). The following requirements are stipulated in the new application: (1) hold a nurse’s license in Japan, (2) complete CN education courses, (3) have at least five years

of practical training, and (4) have at least three years of practical training in the field of specialized nursing.

Practical training in a specialized field is mandatory, following the standards regulated by the JNA (2021b). For example, in skin/excretion care, the requirements stipulate that one has three or more years of nursing experience in the field, a track record of managing five or more nursing cases in the same field and is currently employed at a clinical site providing nursing in skin/excretion care. According to the certification guide (JNA, 2023b), a written examination was conducted after a documentary review to confirm the requirements. Individuals who passed the examination are certified CN.

Certifications are valid for five years and must be renewed within this timeframe to maintain CN status. According to the CN System Regulations, the following requirements are stipulated in the renewal application: (1) certified as CN, (2) have the designated nursing “practical experience” within the past five years, and (3) have the designated “self-improvement” activities within the past five years.

“Practical experience” and “self-improvement” activities are detailed in the recertification guide (JNA, 2023c). “Practical experience” requires at least 2,000 hours working as a CN. “Self-improvement” refers to activities such as attending training courses, writing a paper, lecturing, and engaging in social activities (JNA, 2022c) and translates into points, with a minimum total of 50 points required. However, unlike the CNS, no specific regulations have been published.

Certified Nurse Administrator (CNA)

According to the CNA Regulations (JNA, 2020b), CNA is defined as “individuals who have passed the CNA certified review and are acknowledged as possessing excellent qualities as a manager and the ability to creatively develop the organization.” Although not explicitly stated in the regulations as a role to be fulfilled, work in nursing administration is expected as indicated in the previous definition. Unlike other nursing certification systems, there is no distinction between specialties. The current count of certified individuals is 5,001 (as of December 2022).

The following requirements are stipulated in the new application: (1) hold a nurse’s license in Japan, (2) have at least five years of work experience as a nurse, (3) have at least three years of experience in nursing administration at the level of head nurse or above, (4) complete the third level of the Nurse Administrator (NA) education courses or possess a master’s degree in a discipline related to nursing administration. According to the certification guide (JNA, 2023d), a written examination was conducted after a documentary review to confirm the requirements. Individuals who passed the examination were certified as CNAs.

Certifications are valid for five years and must be renewed within this timeframe to maintain CNA status. According to the CNA Regulations, the following requirements are stipulated in the renewal application: (1) certified as CNA, (2) have the designated nursing

“practical experience” within the past five years, and (3) have the designated “self-improvement” activities within the past five years.

“Practical experience” and “self-improvement” are detailed in the CNA Bylaws (JNA, 2020b). “Practical experience” requires at least 2,000 hours working as a CNA. “Self-improvement” refers to activities such as attending training courses, writing a paper, lecturing, and engaging in social activities (JNA, 2022d) and translated into points, with a minimum total of 50 points required.

Educational Methods

The nursing certification system is based on a curriculum. This chapter provides a detailed account of the content and operation of this curriculum. As previously stated, the CPL does not mandate educational programs. Individuals are considered to have received education through participation in training courses, which are in turn perceived to contribute to personal growth and development.

CNS Education Courses

The CNS education courses are integrated into the Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) Curriculum and defined by JANPU. APN includes CNS and nurse practitioners. CNS courses are offered in specialized nursing fields at Japanese university graduate schools for medicine and nursing. Universities offering CNS courses are mandated to undergo accreditation reviews by JANPU based on these criteria (JANPU, 2023). According to the APN Education Courses Accreditation Regulations (JANPU, 2023), the objectives of these courses are as follows:

APNs are those who deliver exceptional nursing care to individuals, families, and populations, integrating and managing the prevention of illness and the entire treatment, recovery, and living process, using advanced nursing knowledge and skills through the integration of care and cure, with the aim of improving the quality of life for the subject. Their role is to provide advanced practice based on their expertise, education, and consultation for care providers including nursing professionals, research, coordination within the health and welfare team, and coordination of ethical issues. They also function as change agents who can take on new challenges in their area of expertise with comprehensive judgment and organizational problem-solving skills and take on a development role that can be reflected not only in the field but also in education and policy issues. The above-mentioned human resources are to be developed. (p. 10)

This course mandates the attainment of a minimum of 38 credits at the master’s level. Specific requirements include (1) the mandatory completion of at least 8 credits of common subject A, (2) the mandatory completion of 6 credits of common subject B, (3) adherence to curriculum standards for each specialized nursing field, and (4) inclusion of at least 10 credits of practical training courses out of the total 38 credits.

The criteria for Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) Education Courses (JANPU, 2023), common subject A comprises seven subjects, with eight credits to be selected, while common subject B comprises three subjects, with six credits to be selected (see Table 2 for details).

Table 2

Common subjects in CNS Education Courses

Label	Subject	Required Credits
Common subject A	1) Nursing education theory	8
	2) Nursing management theory	
	3) Nursing theory	
	4) Nursing research	
	5) Consultation theory	
	6) Nursing ethics	
	7) Nursing policy theory	
Common subject B	1) Physical assessment	6
	2) Pathophysiology	
	3) Clinical pharmacology	

Source: prepared by the author based on JANPU (2023).

The curricula for specialized nursing fields include discipline-specific achievement goals and subject standards. For instance, in the field of cancer nursing, seven goals are outlined: (1) deepen specialized knowledge about cancer to make informed clinical judgments based on evidence, (2) practice nursing care for cancer patients and their families, employing advanced techniques and curative knowledge, (3) educate the public on cancer prevention and early detection through awareness programs and consultation activities, (4) provide education and consultation on cancer nursing to both medical and nursing personnel, (5) coordinate within the healthcare delivery system to enhance support for cancer patients, (6) make appropriate ethical judgments to safeguard the human rights of cancer patients and take actions aligned with those judgments, and (7) actively engage in research to advance specialized knowledge and skills in the field of cancer nursing.

Students are mandated to obtain at least six credits from common subjects in the specializations, eight credits from specialized subjects, and ten credits from practical training subjects. Common subjects in the specializations encompass three subjects, such as pathophysiology in cancer nursing, whereas specialized subjects comprise six subjects, including cancer drug therapy nursing (see Table 3).

A participation requirement standard for course eligibility was not identified in JNA's published materials. As it is a master's program, according to the eligibility requirements of the accredited organizations, an undergraduate degree is required such as the Graduate School of Nursing Master's Program, Japanese Red Cross College of Nursing (<https://www.redcross.ac.jp/examination/graduate/master/course/>).

Table 3*Curriculum in the specialized nursing fields: the case of cancer nursing*

Label	Subject	Required Credits
Common subjects in the specializations	1) Pathophysiology in Cancer Nursing	6
	2) Theories in Cancer Nursing	
	3) Nursing Assistance Theory in Cancer Nursing	
Specialized subjects	1) Cancer Drug Therapy Nursing	8
	2) Radiation Therapy Nursing	
	3) Stem Cell Transplantation Nursing	
	4) Cancer Rehabilitation Nursing	
	5) Palliative Care	
	6) Cancer Prevention and Early Detection	

Source: prepared by the author based on JANPU (2023, p. 12).

CN Education Courses

CN education courses are offered by Japanese medical and nursing universities and nursing training schools in each specialized nursing field. Universities offering CNS courses are mandated to undergo accreditation reviews by the JNA based on these criteria (JNA, 2023e). The total educational duration is set at approximately 800 hours, encompassing the following components: (1) common subjects: 380 hours; (2) specialized subjects in the field of specialized nursing: 180–225 hours; (3) integrated practice: 15 hours; and (4) practical training: 150 hours.

According to the criteria for CN Education Courses, common subjects comprise 17 subjects including Clinical Pathophysiology (JNA, 2022e) (see Table 4 for details).

Table 4*Common subject in the CN Education Courses*

Subject	Required Hours
1) Clinical pathophysiology	40
2) Clinical reasoning	45
3) Clinical reasoning: Medical Interviewing	15
4) Physical assessment: Fundamentals	30
5) Physical assessment: Application	30
6) Clinical pharmacology: Pharmacokinetics	15
7) Clinical Pharmacology: Pharmacodynamics	15
8) Clinical pharmacology: drug treatment and management	30
9) Introduction to Disease and Clinical Conditions	40
10) Introduction to Disease and Clinical Conditions: Situational	15
11) Medical Safety: Medical Ethics	15
12) Medical Safety: Medical Safety Management	15
13) Team Medicine	15

14) Specific Practice	15
15) Teaching	15
16) Consultation	15
17) Nursing Administration	15

Source: prepared by the author based on JNA (2022e).

The curriculum for specialized nursing includes discipline-specific educational objectives and subject standards. For instance, in the field of infection control, four educational objectives have been outlined: (1) develop the capability to deliver a high standard of nursing care to individuals, families, and groups by utilizing skilled nursing techniques and knowledge based on advanced management skills for the prevention of healthcare-associated infections and advanced clinical reasoning and judgment, (2) cultivate the skill to provide guidance to fellow nurses through practical nursing experiences, (3) develop proficiency in offering consultation to nurses and other nursing professionals, and (4) enhance the ability to play a key role in team medicine by collaborating with various professions.

Students are mandated to study specialized subjects and specific practice training subjects. Specialized subjects encompass eight subjects, such as epidemiology/statistics, while specific practice training subjects comprise two subjects, including administration of drugs in nutrition and fluid management (JNA, 2022f) (see Table 5 for details).

While a participation requirement standard for course eligibility was not identified in the JNA materials, according to the eligibility requirements of the accredited organizations, the same practical training experience is required for CN certification such as the CN Education Courses from the Institute for Graduate Nurses, Japanese Nursing Association (https://www.nurse.or.jp/nursing/nintei/prospectus/index.html#document_kiyose).

Table 5

Curriculum in the specialized nursing fields in the CN Education Courses: the case of infection control

Label	Subject	Required Hours
Specialized subjects	1) Infection control	15
	2) Epidemiology/Statistics	30
	3) Microbiology	30
	4) Healthcare-associated infection surveillance	45
	5) Infection prevention techniques	30
	6) Occupational infection control	15
	7) Infection control instruction and consultation	15
	8) Cleaning, disinfection, sterilization, and facility management	15
Specific practice training subjects	1) Drug administration in nutrition and fluid management	22
	2) Drug administration in infection	39

Source: prepared by the author based on JNA (2022f, p. 2).

NA Education Courses

NA education courses are offered by Japanese medical and nursing universities, as well as nursing training schools. Universities offering NA courses are mandated to undergo accreditation reviews by the JNA based on these guidelines (JNA, 2023f). These courses are categorized into three levels: first, second, and third. The third level, which is a requirement for CNA certification, represents the highest tier of the program.

For each level, the subjects covered are: 1) health care system theory, 2) organizational administration, 3) human resource administration, 4) resource management, 5) quality control, and 6) comprehensive exercises (including practical training). According to the criteria for the CNA (JNA, 2018), the curriculum (educational objectives, achievement of goals, and contents) is structured in progressive stages corresponding to the three levels (see Table 6 for details).

Table 6

Comparison of each level of the NA Education Courses

	First Level	Second Level	Third Level
Main Participation Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of work experience • Interested in nursing administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of work experience • Completion of the first level of the NA Education Course, being a nursing director, or being a nursing assistant director for 1 year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years of work experience • Completion of the second level of the NA Education Course, being a nursing director, or being nursing assistant director for 1 year
Educational objectives	Obtain fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for effective management as a nursing professional	Acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to fulfil basic responsibilities as a nursing manager	Develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to deliver high-quality organizational nursing services to individuals, families, community residents, and society with diverse healthcare needs
Achievement of goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasp the structure and status of the healthcare system • Objectively analyse various challenges in delivering organized nursing services • Understand the role and activities of nursing managers and contemplate the future of nursing management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish goals for the department, aligning them with the organization's philosophy, and develop the nursing management process to achieve these goals • Implement quality management for providing health and welfare services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehend policy trends in health, medical care, and welfare, considering their impact on nursing administration • Analyze the current state of nursing practice and present data to meet society's demands for healthcare services

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop management strategies from the perspective of business administration
Contents in case of organizational administration	Introduction to organizational administration	Practical organizational administration	Organizational design and administration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge of organizational administration • Basic knowledge of nursing administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational change • Organizational decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational design • Design of inter-organizational networks • Design of regional cooperation networks • Diversity • Capabilities required for organizational administration • Roles and abilities required for administrators • Organizational strategy and use of power • Growth and proficiency as an administrator
Total required hours	105	180	180

Source: prepared by the author based on JNA (2023d) and JNA (2018).

The requirements to participate in the third level are: (1) hold a nurse license in Japan, (2) have at least five years of work experience, and (3) complete the second level of the NA Education Course or be a nursing director or nursing assistant director for at least one year.

Discussion

The nurse certification system is informative for CPL in three ways as follows. First, it facilitates selection based on specialization. Second, it differentiates between the requirements for new and renewal certifications. Third, it collaborates with educational institutions for curriculum organization. This chapter examines the implications of a nursing certification system for CPL. The written examination is not currently implemented in the CPL system, although it has been considered by Nemoto et al. (2015) for training librarians in Japan. However, as this was not realized, so it was not examined in this study.

Selection based on specialization

The nursing system offers three certification systems based on specialization. Similarly, CN and CNS feature specialized nursing fields, offering individuals the flexibility to choose based on their professional expertise. In contrast, CPL, a certification system for public librarians, lacks such a system. However, the knowledge and skills acquired by librarians vary depending on the library, department, and job level in which they are employed. For example, some librarians possess research experience in library and information science, whereas others are reference specialists and provide guidance. In addition, some are involved in library management as directors. A certification system that permits specialization selection based on expertise is considered effective in training diverse librarians and highlighting their skills.

For example, the main subjects outlined in the current MEXT ordinance-based librarian qualification curriculum broadly categorize librarian knowledge and skills as follows (Lifelong Learning Policy Bureau, MEXT, 2011):

- Library Core (lifelong learning, library systems and management, library information technology, etc.)
- Library Services (information services, children's services, etc.)
- Library Information Resources (collection building, cataloguing, classification, etc.)

This categorization, which is widely recognized even among librarians, may serve as a basis for defining specialization areas within the field.

Renewal system focused on professional activities

The nursing system evaluates the existence of knowledge and skills for new certification and assesses professional activities such as social activities, education, and research for renewal. In contrast, the primary requirements for new and renewal CPL certifications are similar. It may not be appropriate to use the same criteria to certify both new and renewal.

The introduction of distinct reviewing criteria for new and renewal certifications is considered an effective method for outlining the competencies and experiences necessary for each certification. For instance, new certification may require attendance of a specific training program, whereas renewal certification may require professional activities such as a lecturer. Such systems foster professional activities for certified individuals.

Collaboration with educational institutions for curriculum organization

The nursing system has developed training and educational curricula aligned with the certification system in collaboration with universities and nursing training schools. In contrast, the JLA, which conducts CPL, offers training programs such as "Step-up Training for Mid-Career Staff" (JLA, 2024b). In addition, some universities in Japan operate "certificate programs." According to the Higher Education Bureau, MEXT (2025), certificate programs are systems

through which universities offer study programs for working adults as part of the transfer of the outcomes of their education and research to society. Upon completion of these programs, certificates are issued to individuals under Japan's the School Education Act. For instance, the University of Tsukuba offers the "Library Management and Administration Course" for current librarians (University of Tsukuba, 2024).

Nevertheless, the CPL certification does not necessitate the completion of these programs (although participation is acknowledged as a form of personal growth). This finding suggests a lack of collaboration in this area. The design of the curriculum and the specification of achievement targets are regarded as a means of defining the knowledge and skills that certified librarians should possess. By requiring the completion of a designated curriculum, it becomes possible to demonstrate that individuals possess specific knowledge and skills with certainty. For instance, the "Step-up Training for Mid-Career Staff II" program includes content such as the evaluation of information services and the planning of library services (JLA, 2024b). If this training were made mandatory, librarians who acquire this knowledge and skill set could be formally recognized as CPLs.

Conclusion

In this study, the certification requirements and education programs were surveyed, with the nursing system serving as a case study. A comparison was conducted between the certification requirements and education programs for CNS, CN, and CNA with that for CPL. Finally, the key points beneficial for CPL have been summarized and discussed.

This study contributes to the development of CPL and, by extension, to library and information professional certification systems research. One limitation of this study was the survey, which focused solely on requirements and programs. In order to make improvements to certification systems, specific examining the design from a system of specialization differentiation that corresponds to Japanese librarians and an education method that includes collaboration with educational institutions are necessary.

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