

Professional Nursing Values from a Students' Perspectives

Naglaa Mohamed EL Mokadem

Ph.D, RN, Assistant Professor of Medical Surgical Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, Menoufia University

Abstract: As nursing technology advances, nurses are faced with numerous moral, professional, and ethical dilemmas for which they must make decisions based on their knowledge and personal beliefs. Nursing professional values facilitate working through ethical dilemmas.

Aim: To explore the values held by nursing students at the faculty of Nursing, Menoufia University.

Methods: Using a descriptive design, a convenience sample of 971 nursing students enrolled from first, second, third and fourth year at Faculty of Nursing, Menoufia University. The Nursing Professional Values Scale-Revised (NPVS-R) was used.

Results: The mean scores of the NPVS-R for participants ranged from 2.91 to 4.08 with the total mean score of 3.56 (SD = 0.30). The three statements rated by participants as the most important were "Maintain confidentiality of patients"; protect health and safety of the public"; and "safeguard patients' right to privacy". While the least important items were "participate in public policy decisions affecting distribution of resources"; "participate in peer review" and "Engage in on-going Self- evaluation".

Conclusion: Awareness of nursing faculty of the need for strong professional values is important in preparation of nurses capable of managing patient in an ethical and professional manner.

Keywords: Professional Nursing Values, Nursing Students, Students' Perspective.

I. INTRODUCTION

As nursing technology advances, nurses are faced with numerous moral, professional, and ethical dilemmas for which they must make decisions based on their knowledge and personal beliefs. Nursing professional values facilitate working through ethical dilemmas.

Professional values are defined as "standards of behavior for action that are accepted by practitioners and the professional group to which they belong". (Weis, 2000). Professional values and professional behaviors are expected from all nurses (Ludwick & Silva, 2002). Acquiring nursing professional values is essential to professional development. Nursing professional values enhance patient care and increase nurses' job satisfaction, which ultimately increase clients' appreciation and nurses' retention (Horton, Tschudin, Forget, 2007).

Development of professional values begins with the educational preparation for entering the profession, thus the American Association of Colleges of Nurses (1998) has identified core knowledge of ethics as desirable for baccalaureate nursing students to hold at graduation. Professional values are the basis for practice; they guide communications with patients, colleagues, other professionals, and the public. Incorporation of professional values into the nursing curriculum will provide nursing students with the conceptual, moral, and practical education that is necessary to warrant that the future nursing workforce is grounded in the concept of caring and actualizes this caring through the command of value-based behavior. The development of professional values will help nurses in resolving conflict and prioritizing actions for problems based on importance. Nurses should appreciate the Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2001).

The American Nursing Association endorses the Nursing Code of Ethics as the guide to professional behavior and decision making for the nursing profession (ANA, 2001). There are no consistencies in teaching and evaluating professional values between nursing programs or within similar programs in schools of nursing (Duquette, 2004; Martin et al., 2003). Nursing educators are challenged to educate nursing values that represent the caring professional nurse. Thus, the purpose of the current study was to explore the values held by nursing students at the faculty of Nursing, Menoufia University, Egypt.

II. BODY OF ARTICLE

Design: A descriptive (cross-sectional) design was used.

Sample: A convenience sample of 971 nursing students enrolled from first, second, third and Fourth year at Faculty of Nursing, Menoufia University, Shebin AL Khoum, Menoufia Governorate, Egypt.

Tool: The Nursing Professional Values Scale-Revised (NPVS-R) (Weis and Schank, 2009) designed to measure nurses' professional values. The NPVS-R is a 26-item instrument. The scale is a Likert scale that reflects the nine value statements in the Code of Ethics for Nurses. Each item in the NPVS-R is a short descriptive phrase representing a specific code provision and its interpretive explanation. The degree of importance of these items ranging from 1 (not important) to 5 (most important). The possible range of scores is from 26 to 130. A high score for the scale indicates that the individual has strong professional values. It is a self-administered scale that takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Reliability reported by Weis and Shank (2009) was a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .93 after testing the instrument on 404 nursing students and practicing nurses. The validity of the NPVS-R was determined using factor analysis, which demonstrated that the items in the instrument accurately measure provisions in the ANA. Demographic data were also included in data collection to measure the level of undergraduate nursing education, age and gender.

Pilot Study: A pilot study was conducted on 10% of the study sample to test the clarity of the questionnaire and to estimate the time needed to complete the questionnaire.

Ethical Consideration: An official approval was obtained from the Dean and the Research Committee at the Faculty of Nursing, Menoufia University to seek the approval for data collection. Instructions on completing the surveys were given by the researcher before administering the surveys to the students.

RESULTS:

Characteristics of the Study Sample:

A total of 971 nursing student completed the NPVS-R questionnaire. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 21 years old with mean of 19.53 ± 1.11 . The majority of the participants were females (88.3%) and only 11.7% were males. The first year students comprise 42.4%, the second year students were 28.4%, the third year students were 17.0% and the fourth year were 12.2%. See table (1).

TABLE: I Demographic data of the participating students

Variables	Number (%)
Age Rang	18-21
$\bar{X} \pm SD$	19.53 ± 1.11
Sex	
Male	114 (11.7)
Female	857 (88.3)
Levels of Education	
First year	412
Second year	276
Third year	165
Fourth year	118

The mean scores of the NPVS-R items on the five point Likert-type scales for nursing students ranged from 2.91 to 4.08 with the total mean score of the NPV-R Scale of 3.56 (SD = 0.30).

International Journal of Novel Research in Healthcare and Nursing

Vol. 4, Issue 1, pp: (405-409), Month: January - April 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

TABLE: II Rank of the most important Nursing Professional Values rated by students

Professional Values	M (SD)
Maintain confidentiality of patients	4.08 (1.12)
Protect health and safety of the public	3.96 (1.10)
Safeguard patients' right to privacy	3.93 (1.15)

Table (2) show the top three statements rated by participants nursing students as the most important professional values were patients' confidentiality ; health and safety of the public; patients' privacy and respect for person.

TABLE: III Rank of the least important Nursing Professional Values rated by student

Professional Values	M (SD)
Participate in peer review	2.90 (1.16)
Participate in public policy decisions affecting distribution of resources	2.92 (1.17)
Engage in on-going Self- evaluation	3.08 (1.19)

Table (3) presents the least important three items identified by the participants nursing students were: "participating in peer review" "participate in public policy decisions"; and "on-going self- evaluation".

The findings of the current study are limited in generalization by some methodological limitations. This study was cross-sectional. Cross-sectional methods limits generalization of the results due to the effects of history and changes in the population that have occurred over time, such as maturation and attrition (Gall, et al., 2003). Using a convenience sample of nursing students enrolled in the faculty of Nursing, Menoufia University that limit the generalization of the findings to other nursing students in other universities.

The findings of the study provided useful information about the importance of professional values held by nursing students. The study findings are similar to the findings reported by Lin, Liching Sung, Yarbrough, Alfred & Martin, (2010) and Hayes, (2006); however, nursing students in the present study have lower NPVS-R mean scores compared to the students in Donmez and Ozsoy, (2016); Alfred, Yarbrough, Lin, Wang, (2011) and Clark, (2009) studies.

According to NPVS-R statements of nursing professional values, the statements related to confidentiality of patient; safety of the public; privacy and respect received the highest scores among the participating students, while participate in public policy decisions; peer review and on-going self-evaluation statements received the lowest level of importance. Similar findings have been reported in Iran (Parvan et al. 2012); Taiwan (Alfred et al. 2011); China (Lin et al. 2010); and The United States (Leners et al. 2006) where they have found that the most important professional values of nursing students were the caring issues, where the focus is concern for patients. Also, findings of the present study are very similar to what was reported by Kobra, Vahid, & Fahimeh, (2012) except for that the participants in Kobra and colleges study rated the statement of "seek additional education to update knowledge and skills" as one of the highest important value.

It was interesting to note that nursing students in the current study rated professional issues as very important and rated code statements addressing activist issues as less important. The first four code statements focuses on professional issues related to client rights. The professional issues identified as most important included confidentiality, privacy, protection of the moral and legal rights of patients and respect for persons. The activist issues identified as important included promotion the fair access to nursing and health care, involvement in health related activities, and health promotion. The findings of the current study are different from Alfred et al. (2011) findings who found that the most important professional values of American nursing students were the activist issues, where the focus is on the dynamic component of the profession through which the nurse can impact professional change and in turn patient care. Also, the current study findings are different from Bang et al. (2013) findings who reported that the most important professional values of Korean nursing students were the professionalism issues which reflect practices and standards of the nursing. These discrepancies in the findings can be explained by the cultural differences and the fact that culture plays an important role in shaping individual values. (Parandeh et al., 2014). However, most of the previous studies found that the most important statements for nursing student were in the caring issues since caring for patients is the main focus of the code of ethics for nurses.

International Journal of Novel Research in Healthcare and Nursing

Vol. 4, Issue 1, pp: (405-409), Month: January - April 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

(Martin et al., (2003); Ozcan, Akpınar, & Lin and Wang (2010). Patient care is a very fundamental aspect of nursing education, as a result, nursing education has a vital role in acquiring and maintaining professional values

III. CONCLUSION

Professional nurses require having the ability to manage complex ethical dilemmas. The attentiveness of nursing faculty of the need for strong professional values is important in preparation of nurses skilled in managing patient in an ethical and professional manner. The findings of the current study can raise consciousness about the importance of nursing professional values as a foundation of professionalism.

Schools of nursing need to include teaching professional values within the curricula. The findings of the study will provide nursing educators with information regarding stronger and weaker professional values in students, which will allow nurse educators the chance to change and improve teaching strategies to strengthen the areas of weaker values. Understanding the level of importance for each value among students, is essential for enhancing the quality of care provided for patients and promoting the nursing profession. The findings of the current study showed that the items scoring the lowest in the NPVS-R were still within the "important" range. However, these items could be emphasized more by the educators to convey their importance. Finally, we should examine nursing educators' competency in teaching professional values.

Implications for Future Research:

There is a need for a longitudinal study to examine the professional values of nursing students at the entering and exiting of the nursing program to provide information about the developmental process that occurs during the program of study and to enable educators to examine how the professional values are taught by nursing faculty. Another implication would be a replication of the study using nursing students in a different geographical location.

Implications for Nursing Education:

The findings of the current study showed that the lowest items were related to promoting the nursing profession. These results indicate that students are not interested in taking an active role in promoting the nursing profession through actions such as participating in public policy decisions, peer reviews, and nursing research. Educators could help students get involved by discussing political issues in the class, hosting nurse organization meetings in the schools of nursing, enrolling nursing students in research projects, and utilizing research findings in practice could also facilitate the development of professional values in this weak area. In addition, develop strategies to enhance value orientation in educational institutions and practice setting.

REFERENCES

- [1] Weis, D. & Schank, M. J. (2000). An instrument to measure professional nursing values. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 32(2), 201-204.
- [2] Ludwick, R., & Silva, M. C. (2002). Ethical grounding for entry into practice: Respect, collaboration, and accountability. *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*. Retrieved from http://nursingworld.org/ojin/ethicol/ethics_9.htm
- [3] Horton, K., Tschudin, V., Forget, A., (2007). The value of nursing: a literature review. *Nursing Ethics* 14 (6), 716–740.
- [4] American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (1998). *Essentials of baccalaureate education for professional nursing practice*. Washington, DC
- [5] American Nurses Association. (2001). *Code of ethics for nurses with interpretive statements*. Washington DC: American Nurses Publishing.
- [6] Duquette, L. M. (2004). Effects of nursing on the formation of professional values. Retrieved from ProQuest Database.
- [7] Martin, P., Yarbrough, S., & Alfred, D. (2003). Professional values held by baccalaureate and associate degree nursing students. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 35(3), 291-296.

International Journal of Novel Research in Healthcare and NursingVol. 4, Issue 1, pp: (405-409), Month: January - April 2017, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

- [8] Weis, D., & Schank, M. J. (2009). Development and Psychometric Evaluation of Nurses Professional Values Scale-Revised (NVPS-R). *Journal of Nursing Measurement*, 17(3), 221-231. doi:10.1891/1061-3749.17.3.221
- [9] Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction 77th ed.*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- [10] Lin YH, Liching Sung W, Yarbrough S, Alfred D, Martin P. (2010). Changes in Taiwanese nursing student values during the educational experience. *Nursing Ethics*. 17(5):646-54.
- [11] Hayes TL. (2006). *An Exploration of Professional Values Held By Baccalaureate and Associate Degree Nursing Students: Florida State University.*
- [12] Donmez R.O, Ozsoy S. (2016). Factors influencing development of professional values among nursing students. *Pak J Med Sci*. 2016;32(4):988-993. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12669/pjms.324.10616>
- [13] Alfred D MP, Yarbrough S, Lin YH, Wang L. (2011). *A Comparison of Professional Values of Taiwanese and American Nursing Students. The University of Texas*
- [14] Clark DK. *Professional values (2009). A study of education and experience in nursing students and nurses: Capella University.*
- [15] Parvan K, Zamanzadeh V, Hosseini FA. (2012). Assessment of professional values among Iranian nursing students graduating in universities with different norms of educational services. *Thrita*. 1(2):37-43.
- [16] Leners DW, Roehrs C, Piccone AV. (2006). Tracking the development of professional values in undergraduate nursing students. *J Nurs Educ*. 45(12):504-511.
- [17] Kobra P., Vahid Z., & Fahimeh H. (2012). Nursing Students' Perspectives on professional Values in the Universities of Medical Science in Iran. *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences*. 3(6), 1183-1191.
- [18] Bang D, Senaratana W, Kunaviktikul W, Klunklin A, McElmurry BJ. (2009). Nursing values in China: the expectations of registered nurses. *Nursing Health Science*. 11(3): 312-7.
- [19] Ozcan M, Akpınar A, Ergin AB. (2012). Personal and professional values grading among midwifery students. *Nursing Ethics*; 19(3): 399-407.