

Original Article

Determination of Professional Values in Nursing Students

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Abstract

Aim: This study was made to determine the professional values of nursing students and the factors that affect these values.

Method: Students studying in the first and fourth classes of a nursing college made up the universe of the study. In our sample, 104 students who were studying first grade and 84 students who were studying fourth grade voluntarily participated in our study. The data of the study were collected using the "Introductory Information Form and the Professional Values Scale of Nurses (NPVS)".

Results: It was determined that the mean score of the Professional Values Scale of the students was 103.25 ± 16.96 . In the study, the average scores of female students, fourth grade students, scientific meeting / congress participants, the students who were satisfied with choosing this profession, the students who were considering academic career were higher and statistically significant differences were determined.

Conclusion: It was determined that the professional values scale scores of the student nurses were at a good level. Personal and environmental factors can affect the professional values of student nurses. Professional values of nursing are the most important components for the protection of high quality standards in the nursing profession. These values should be given to nurses more in their education in order to gain them from the student years.

Keywords: Student, Nurse, Professional values

Introduction

The nursing profession which is developed by the society to meet the health needs and it is a professional health discipline that deals with individual, family and community health. Nurses hold values that underlie their moral and ethical responsibilities towards their patients, their communities, their professions, their employers and themselves.

Values can be expressed in terms of adopted behaviors and verbal expressions or indirectly

through verbal expressions and nonverbal behaviors. Our values influence our preferences and behaviors (Burkhardt & Nathaniel, 2008). It shows that values are a direction and action orientation for the long-term power and growth of the nursing and it is a basis for mediating the decision-making processes that nurses commonly confront (Bond, Mandelco B & Warnick, 2004).

Nursing values are the most important components for the protection of high quality standards in the nursing profession (Parvan, Zamanzadeh & Hosseini, 2012). Values influence individuals'

personal principles, behavior standards and enable the creation of an ethical framework (Iacobucci, Daly & Lindell, 2013; Shahriari, Mohammadi & Abbaszadeh, 2013). Professional values play a very important role in the nursing profession and constitute the main source for nursing practices (Burkhardt & Nathaniel, 2008).

Professionalism is a service which is carried out by experts trained in the field and supported by relevant professional organizations (Adıguzel, Tanriverdi & Ozkan, 2011). In other words, professionalism is an expertise in a field, knowledge, skill and behavior pattern. Professionalism is getting of superior intellectual education to fulfill the duties, the result of this education is to reach perfection by gaining knowledge and experience and to transform the experiences in the direction of personal principles and to make free activities (Altıok & Üstun, 2014).

Being a professional means doing the work undertaken in the best possible way and to promise to the society for quality care. The caregiver is valuable to society as long as it does well (Karadag, 2006). Professional values are the director of nurses' interaction with patients, colleagues and other professionals and the community (Leners, Roehrs & Piccone, 2006). And, a guide to ethical behavior to provide security and humanitarian assistance (Lawler, 2008). Professional values are the reflections of personal values and they were gained in nursing with the process of socialization (Shahriari, Mohammadi & Abbaszadeh, 2013). Professional values are an important concept that integrates students' critical thinking and morality which is necessary to provide competent nursing care in the nursing profession.

In studies conducted to determine the professional values of nursing students, the teaching of professional values positively affected the development of the professional values of the students (Eddy et al., 1994; Schank & Weis, 2001; Rogstad, Nortvedt & Aasland, 2004; Bang et al., 2011; Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2013; Lin et al., 2016). Therefore, nursing educators can influence the professional values of their students by role modeling (Parandeh et al., 2015).

The moral performance of nursing educators significantly affects development and growth of

professional values of students in their education programs (Leners, Roehrs & Piccone, 2006).

Awareness of professional values ensure that we have the necessary knowledge to plan, conduct and evaluate specific interventions for better communication and integration in the professional practice of the nursing. This leads to a better quality of care in health care (Hoyuelos et al., 2010).

Nursing students should be aware of their own values during their undergraduate education and combine these values with professional values of nursing. This study was carried out in order to determine the professional values of the student nurses and the factors affecting these values.

Material and Method

The study was carried out in Uludag University in Bursa in May 2016. The first and fourth year students of a nursing school in the 2015-2016 academic year constituted the student's universe. 104 first year students and 84 fourth year students participated in our study voluntarily.

The necessary permissions for the study was obtained from the institution. Verbal approvals were obtained from the students who participated in the study by giving information about the study.

The data were collected with a data form consisting of two parts. In the first part, there was the "Introductory Information Form" which contained the individual characteristics of the participants who were participates in the study. In the second part, there was "The Nurse's Professional Values Scale (NPVS)".

The Nurse's Professional Values Scale (NPVS)

The Nurse's Professional Values Scale (NPVS) was developed by Weis and Schan (2000) and adapted to Turkish language by Geckil et al.(2012) and the validity and reliability were made. This scale is a five-point likert scale consisting of 26 items and nurses evaluate their professional values in this scale.

Each expression in the scale is ranked as 'not important' to 'very important', and each category is scored as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The lowest score is 26 and the highest score is 130. High scores indicate high professional values. The scale has a 5-factor structure and the factors are named according to the

items they contain and the original scale. Factors and numbers of items are as follows:

Factor 1: " Caregiving ", a total of 8 items.

Factor 2: "Professionalism", a total of 7 items.

Factor 3: "Activism", a total of 5 items.

Factor 4: "Justice", a total of 3 items.

Factor 5: "Loyalty", a total of 3 items.

Evaluation of the Data

The data were evaluated in the SPSS 15.0 statistical package program. Arithmetic mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum and percentage parameters were used in the evaluation of the data while independent sample t test was used to determine the differences between the two groups in the intergroup comparisons. ANOVA was used to determine the difference between means of more than two groups and Pearson correlation tests were used to determine the linear relationship between the two variables. $p < 0.05$ was accepted as statistically significant.

Results

A 72.9% of the nursing students who participated in our study were female while 27.1% of the nursing students who participated in our study were male. 55.3% of the students were in the first grade and 44.7% were in the fourth grade. When students' willingness to choose their profession was assessed, 48.9% of them were found to be selected their profession willingly and 47.3% of them were satisfied with their profession selection. 64.9% of the students participated in scientific congress/meetings related to their profession.

Also, a 59.6% of the students did not receive any training related to professional values and 71.2% of them stated that they wanted to have an academic career. The mean of NPVS scores of the nurses in the study was 103.25 ± 16.96 . The mean of NPVS scores of female students were found to be 105.70 ± 15.89 while the mean of NPVS scores of male students were found to be 97.30 ± 18.47 . The mean of NPVS scores of the first year students was 97.92 ± 17.23 ; The average score of fourth year

students was 110.45 ± 13.84 . The difference between these two groups was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$).

When the mean of scores of some characteristics of the nurses and the professional values scale according to these characteristics were examined, a statistically significant difference was found between the nursing department students who selected nursing department willingly and the nursing department students who selected nursing department without willingness. The NPVS scores of the nursing students who were satisfied to choose their profession are higher than those of the nursing students who were not satisfied with their selection. The difference between them was also statistically significant (Table 1). A statistically significant relationship was found between the participation in professional scientific meetings status of the students and the professional values scale ($p < 0.01$).

There was no significant relationship between students' education on professional values. The mean of Professional Values Scale scores of the students who want to make an academic career in the nursing was 107.86 ± 14.72 while the mean score of the students who did not want to make an academic career was 92.74 ± 17.45 . The difference between the scores of professional values scale of students who wanted to make an academic career and the scores of professional values scale of students who did not want to make an academic career was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

Professional values in nursing are divided into subcategories of care, professionalism, loyalty, activism and justice. When we analyzed this scale in sub-headings in the study, the mean scores were found as 33.12 ± 5.60 for caregiving, 26.71 ± 5.04 for professionalism, 20.05 ± 3.89 for activism, 12.13 ± 2.25 for justice and 11.48 ± 2.53 for loyalty.

In addition, it was found that the relationship between each category was statistically significant (Table 2). There was a statistically significant relationship between the scores of NPVS subscales of the students (Table 3).

Table 1: Comparison of the students' mean NPVS scores and personal characteristics of students (n=188)

Personal Characteristics	N	Mean±SD	Test and significance
Gender			
Female	137(72.9%)	105.70±15.89	t = 2.957
Male	51 (27.1%)	97.30±18.47	p< 0.05 (,003)
Class			
First year	104(55.3%)	97.92±17.23	t = -5.402
Fourth year	84 (44.7%)	110.45±13.84	p<0.001 (,000)
Willingness to choose the profession			
Yes	92 (48.9%)	106.05±17.34	F = 2.608
No	43 (22.9%)	99.06±18.51	p > 0.05 (,076)
Partially	53 (28.2%)	102.73±14.24	
Satisfaction about selection of the profession			
Yes	89 (47.3%)	107.49±16.71	F=5.918
No	35 (18.6%)	96.71±16.50	p < 0.01 (,003)
Partially	64 (34.1%)	101.71±16.28	
Scientific conference/meeting participation status			
Yes	122 (64.9%)	106.35±15.62	t = 3.187
No	66 (35.1%)	98.47±18.25	p < 0.05 (,002)
Education status about professional values			
Yes	76 (40.4%)	106.40±15.21	t =1.936
No	112 (59.6%)	101.56±17.85	p >0.05 (,054)
The desire to make an academic career			
Yes	134 (71.2%)	107.86±14.72	t =6.033
No	54 (28.8%)	92.74±17.45	p< 0.001 (,000)

Table 2: NPVS sub-dimensions of the Scale

Sub-dimensions of the Scale	Subscale Mean Scores	Mean±SD	Min – max Score
PROFESSIONALISM	3.81	26.71±5.04	7-35
ACTIVISM	4.01	20.05±3.89	5-25
JUSTICE	4.04	12.13±2.25	3-15
LOYALTY	3.82	11.48±2.53	3-15
CAREGIVING	4.14	33,12±5.60	8-40

Table 3: Comparison of NPVS sub-dimensions of the students with each other (n=188)

Sub-dimensions of the Scale	CAREGIVING	PROFESSIONALISM	ACTIVISM	JUSTICE
	.677**			
PROFESSIONALISM	.000			
	.699**	.770**		
ACTIVISM	.000	.000		
	.790**	.727**	.706**	
JUSTICE	.000	.000	.000	
	.677**	.624**	.645**	.695**
LOYALTY	.000	.000	.000	.000

**Pearson correlation test $p < 0.001$

Discussion

The mean score of professional values scale (NPVS) of the student nurses is 103.25 ± 16.96 and the maximum score that can be taken from this scale was 130 points. In the study performed by Geckil et al. (2012), the mean NPVS score was found as 106.4 ± 13.6 . In the study of Lin et al. (2016), the mean of NPVS scores of Taiwanese nursing students was 99.10 ± 15.6 , while the mean of NPVS scores of Chinese nursing students were 100.47 ± 16.6 . In the study conducted by Iacobucci et al. (2013), the mean professional values scores of nursing students was found to be 101.43 ± 12.78 . In the study conducted by Alfred et al. (2013) with Taiwanese and American nursing students, it was determined that the Taiwanese students had the mean of the nursing professional values scale scores was 104.27 ± 16.81 and American students had the mean of the nursing professional values scale scores was 106.16 ± 12.93 . Alkaya et al. (2017) conducted a study with American and Turkish nursing students, the mean of NPVS scores of the American students was 109.2 ± 12.3 , whereas the mean of the NPVS scores of Turkish students was 101.6 ± 17.0 . Other studies have indicated that culture is an important factor in the development of professional values (Wang, Rao & D'Auria, 1994; Yarbrough & Alfred, 2003; Rassin, 2008; Konishi et al., 2009; Martin, Karadagli, 2016).

The sub-group with the highest mean score in the study was caregiving. This was followed by subgroups of justice, activism, loyalty and professionalism. Similarly, the sub-group with the highest mean score was caregiving in the study conducted by Lin et al. (2016).

Statistical significance was found when the mean of NPVS scores were compared according to gender of the students in the study ($p < 0.05$). The mean score of male students was found to be lower than that of female students. Similar to our study, Karadagli (2016) and Martin (2003) found that men's NPVS scores were lower than women's. In the study of Parvan et al. (2012) and Kaya et al. (2012), it was determined that gender did not affect professional values. The relationship between gender and professional value is not consistent in the literature. Therefore, there is a need for qualitative study "to be done with male students" to determine the cause.

For the development of professional values in nursing students, the education of nursing students is an important factor to be taken into consideration. In the study, a statistically significant difference was found when the NPVS scores were compared according to the class levels of the students ($p < 0.05$). The fourth grade students scores were higher than the scores of the first grade students. Karadagli (2016) found a significant relationship between the level of students' classroom and professional values. The mean score of the students who read in the first grade is higher. Vezeau (2006) emphasized the importance of the necessity of giving the professional values to the nursing students from the first years of their education. It was stated that the nursing curriculum should be discussed from the early semesters. In the study, the higher scores of senior students may be as a result of education and guidance for the scope of professional values and the elimination of the lack of knowledge until the last year of their school life.

In the study, students' willingness to choose their profession was assessed, no statistically significant difference was found between the individuals who willingly and unwillingly chose the profession. In addition, the individuals who were satisfied with their profession choice were found to have a higher NPVS scores than the individuals who were dissatisfied with their profession choice and a statistically significant difference was found between them. We did not find any study on the comparison of the nursing professional values with the satisfaction about profession choice and the willingness to choose the profession. In the study, there was no statistically significant difference between educated and non-educated students when education status about professional values of the students were compared.

The majority of the students in the study stated that they wanted to make an academic career. The NPVS scores of the students who wanted to make an academic career were found to be statistically significantly different from the NPVS scores of the students who did not want to make an academic career ($p < 0.05$).

Bang et al. (2011) conducted a study on South Korean nursing students and they found that the students who planned to continue graduate

education had higher professional value scores than the others. This result shows that the students with high professional value scores preferred to continue their academic careers.

Conclusion

In the study, the mean of professional values scores of the nursing students was found to be 103.25 ± 16.96 . In the study, the factors affecting professional values were determined to be gender, class level, willingness to make an academic career, willingness to attend a scientific meeting/congress and the satisfaction about the profession. In the nursing professional subscales, the scores of subscales of caregiving and justice subscales were found to be proportionally higher than the the scores of other subscales.

Nursing is a respected profession because of its role in the preservation of human values in society. The educators of the nursing profession have the obligation to prepare nursing students equipped with professional values. In order to improve professional nursing education and practice in this direction, the trainings on this topic should be added in curriculum, the students should be educated about the importance of fellowship and participation to professional organizations. comprehensive studies on this issue should be carried out with different nursing schools from the first year until the fourth year. Further studies are needed to determine how other demographic and educational aspects affect professional values.

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