

The Relationship between Professional Values and Clinical Decision Making among Nursing Student

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Abstract: Professional values provide internal motivation and improve ethical responsibility and professional devotion. Therefore, each professional is at the center of performance and decision-making.

The study aimed to identify relationship between professional values and decision making among nursing students.

Materials and Method: Descriptive – co-relational design was used. The study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing at Tanta University. Convenience sample (395) nursing students were selected from third and fourth academic year where third year (150) nursing student and fourth year (245) nursing student. The data was collected by using Nursing Professional Value Scale and Nurse Decision Making Instrument -Revised 2014.

Results: More than fifty percent (59.3%) of nursing student had high level of professional values while 76.25% of nursing student had moderate level of clinical decision making. Nursing students' total clinical decision making was significantly correlated with their total professional values. Also; it was significantly correlated with all dimensions of professional values except professionalism dimension.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that more than fifty percent of nursing student at Tanta Faculty of nursing had high level of professional values specifically, justice, trust, activism, professionalism, and caring respectively. While, more than seventy of them had moderate level of clinical decision making. Nursing students' total clinical decision making was significantly correlated with their total of professional values and its dimensions except professionalism dimension.

Recommendations: Nursing educators could facilitate involvement of students by adding action situations as part of nursing curriculum. They must provide more opportunities of students that allow them to experience more situations similar to clinical settings in order to enhance learning clinical decision making and apply professional values.

Keywords: Professional values, clinical decision making, nursing students.

I. Introduction

Professional values are standards for action established by practitioners and professional group to provide a framework for evaluating beliefs and attitudes that influence behavior^(1,2). Nurses' awareness of professional values and the influence of these values on their behavior are considered essential part of nursing care⁽³⁾. The use of professional values in nursing practice helps to increase the quality of patients care. In addition to; increase nursing satisfaction, retention and commitment to the organization^(4,5).

During clinical training nursing student found themselves not have enough experience to cope with a highly dynamic and intense clinical environment⁽⁶⁾. They need to be equipped with common professional nursing values such as caring, activism, trust, professionalism and justice during their undergraduate education. The acquirement of these values help them to adhere to nursing's standards in today's complex healthcare environment^(7,8).

Caring is a fundamental function of nurse in which concern for the growth and well-being of patients is expressed. Activism is the efforts to promote, and direct social, political, economic, environmental change, or stasis. Trust is confidence in a person integrity and ability, appreciations of the other, and independent existence. Professionalism means behaving in an ethical manner and fulfilling one's responsibilities in all situations with appropriate behavior, attitudes and communication. Justice consider individuals' dignity and respect in addition to equal access to health services and the right of being fairly treated and cared regardless economic, social, and cultural status⁽⁹⁻¹¹⁾.

A well-developed value system helping nursing students to find solutions for ethical dilemmas in the decision making process⁽¹²⁾. Professional values guide nursing student action, interaction with others, judgment, rationalization, and choices. When nursing students faced with problems, they reflect on their personal and professional values to solve problem and make appropriate decision^(13,14).

Clinical decision making is a continuous process, where data are gathered, interpreted, and evaluated to select appropriate choice of action⁽¹⁵⁾. It is an important skill in professional nursing practice and the key

competence for nurse's success. It can be ranged from fast, intuitive decisions to analytical, evidence-based decisions. Intuitive decision is characterized by rapid, unconscious process based on global knowledge that views the patient holistically while synthesizing information to improve patient outcomes. Nursing students use their previous experiences to guide their decision. While in analytic decision, decisions are made after gathering information about the issue, reviewing possible solutions and finally making the decision^(16, 17).

Clinical decision making consists of four main stages; collecting information to define patient condition, processing data to determine nursing problems, planning and implementing, monitoring and evaluating nursing interventions and patient condition⁽¹⁸⁾. All stages of clinical decision-making are very important to improve clinical performance of nursing students. But it is very complex process due to fast amount of information to be processed and uncertainty of the environment⁽¹⁹⁾.

Educational program gradually increase the level of awareness and skills of problem solving of nursing students, which will eventually increase their perception of professional values⁽²⁾. Professional values provide internal motivation and improve ethical responsibility and professional devotion. Therefore, each professional is at the center of performance and decision-making^(2,8). Thus understanding relationship between nursing student's professional values and their clinical decision making is very important.

II. Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to identify relationship between professional values and decision making among nursing students.

III. Research question

The current study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of professional values among nursing students?
2. What are the levels of decision making among nursing students?
3. What is the relation between levels of professional value and levels of decision making among nursing students?

IV. Subjects and method

Subjects

Research Design: Descriptive – co-relational design was used.

Setting: The study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing at Tanta University.

Subjects: Convenience sample (395) nursing students were selected from third and fourth academic year where third year (150) nursing student and fourth year (245) nursing student.

Tools of the study

To achieve the aim of the study two tools were used.

Tool I: Nursing Professional Value Scale-NPVS

This tool was developed by Weis D and Schank MJ (2009)⁽²⁰⁾ and modified by researcher based on recent related literature^(25, 28) to assess level of nursing student professional values. It consisted of two parts

Part one: Subject characteristics such as age, sex, grad, and marital status.

Part two: Nursing Professional Value Scale-NPVS. It consisted of 26 items on five dimensions (Caring, trust, professionalism, activism and justice). The caring dimension consisted of (9) items; professionalism (4) items, justice (3) items, while activism and trust (5) items each.

Scoring system:

Nursing students responses based on five points Likert Scale ranged from 5 to 1 where 5= most important, 4= very important, 3= important, 2= somewhat important, and 1= not important. The total scores were calculated by summing of all categories where $\geq 75\%$ indicate high level of professional values, 74-50% indicate moderate level of professional values and $< 50\%$ indicate low level of professional values

Tool II: Nurse Decision Making Instrument -Revised 2014.

This tool was developed by Lauri and Salanterä (2002)⁽²¹⁾ to assess level of clinical decision making for nursing student to determine whether nursing students make more analytic or intuitive decisions in practice. This tool consisted of a 24-item describes four main stages of clinical decision making; every stage was including 6 items as follow:

Stage 1: Data collection includes items 1-6.

Stage 2: Data processing and identification of the problem include items 7-12.

Stage 3: Plan of action includes items 13-18.

Stage 4: Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation include items 19-24.

Scoring system:

The subject response was measured by five points Likert Scale ranged from always (5) to never (1). Score for all the odd items are reverse scored. The total scores were calculated by summing of all categories where high level of decision making >78 indicate intuitive student, moderate level of decision making 68-78 indicate flexible decision making/ both analytical and intuitive student and low level of decision making < 67 indicate analytical student.

Method

Administrative and ethical considerations:

1-An official permission to carry out the study was obtained from the dean of faculty of nursing at Tanta University.

2- The purpose and procedures of the study was explained to nursing students and their verbal consent to participate was received and those who were willing to participate were given a questionnaire to complete and they have the right to withdrawal from the study.

Tool validity

3- Content validity of the tools was tested by nine experts in field of nursing and nursing administration.

Pilot study

4- Pilot study was conducted on 10% from nursing students to identify the obstacles and problems that may be encountered in data collection.

5- Reliability of the tools was tested by using Cronbach Alpha test, tool one was .896 and tool two was .802.

Field work

6- All tools were distributed to nursing students ($n = 395$). The questionnaire was distributed in classroom to students of the third and fourth year. The researcher was present during collection of data for any needed guidance. The questionnaire collected after filled. They were also assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses.

7-Data collection was completed at second semester of academic year 2016-2017.

8- Responding times to all questions in the tool consume nearly (15) minute.

Statistical analysis

The data collected was organized, tabulated and statistically analyzed by using SPSS software statistical computer package version 16. Descriptive measures, including frequency, percentage were presented. Chi-square test was applied to determine differences between variables. Spearman's coefficient correlation test was used to show variables correlation.

V. REAULTS

Table (1): Characteristics of nursing students (N=395).

Subject characteristics	Fourth year(N=245)		Third year(150)	
	No	%	No	%
Age				
20- 21	98	40.00	126	84
22	108	44.09	18	12
23-24	39	15.91	6	4
Sex				
Female	199	81.23	123	82
Male	46	18.77	27	18
Marital status				
Married	13	5.3	8	5.3
Single	232	94.7	142	94.7

Table (1) represents characteristics of nursing students. This table show that the age of all nursing student ranged from 20-24year. Majority (84%) of third year nursing student age ranged from 20-21 years while more than forty percent (44.09%) of fourth year nursing student at age 22 year. High percent (82%, 81.23%) of both years are female and majority of them (94.7) are single.

Table (2): Nursing students' levels of professional values (N=395).

Items of professional value	Nursing students levels (N=395)					
	High		Moderate		Low	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Caring	231	58.5	159	40.2	5	1.3
Professionalism	250	63.3	131	33.2	14	3.5
Trust	282	71.4	105	26.6	8	2.0
Justice	299	75.7	86	21.8	10	2.5
Activism	268	67.8	114	28.9	13	3.3
Total	234	59.3	157	39.7	4	1.0

Table (2) shows nursing students' levels of professional values. More than fifty percent (59.3%) of nursing student had high level of professional values especially; high percent (75.7%, and 71.4%) for justice and trust followed by (67.8%, 63.3% and 58.5%) for activism, professionalism, and caring respectively.

Table (3): Nursing students' levels of clinical decision making (N=395).

Clinical decision making	Nursing students levels (N=395)					
	High		Moderate		Low	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Total of clinical decision making	19	4.25	305	76.25	71	17.50

Table (3) shows nursing students' levels of clinical decision making. More than seventy percent (76.25%) of nursing student had moderate level of clinical decision making while, few percent (17.50% & 4.25%) of them had low and high level of clinical decision making.

Table (4): Comparison between third and fourth academic year nursing students' on levels of professional values (N=395).

	4 th grade (N=245)						3 rd grade (N=150)						X ² P-value
	High		Moderate		Low		High		Moderate		Low		
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1-Caring	144	59.2	98	39.6	3	1.2	87	58.0	61	40.6	2	1.3	6.212 0.267
2-Professionalism	160	65.3	77	31.4	8	3.3	90	60.0	54	36.0	6	4.0	1.977 0.065*
3-Trust	165	67.3	70	28.6	10	4.1	99	66.0	50	33.3	1	0.7	2.709 0.266
4-Justice	165	67.3	70	28.6	10	4.1	115	76.7	33	22.0	2	1.3	97.294 0.801
5-Activism	145	59.2	91	37.2	9	3.6	91	60.3	51	34.4	8	5.3	2.881 0.082*
Total	149	58.8	92	39.6	4	1.6	85	56.7	65	43.3	0	0.0	2.990 0.000*

***Statistically significant at p<0.05**

Table (4) represents comparison between third and fourth academic year nursing students' on levels of professional values. This table show significant difference for total professional values of nursing students in third and fourth academic year at (p<0.05) especially significant difference in professionalism and activism.

Table (5): Comparison between third and fourth academic year nursing students' on levels of clinical decision making (N=395).

Item	4 th grade (N=245)						3 rd grade (N=150)						X ² P-value
	High		Moderate		Low		High		Moderate		Low		
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Clinical decision making	7	2.8	193	78.8	45	18.4	12	8.0	112	74.7	26	17.3	4.784 0.684

***Statistically significant at p<0.05**

Table (5) represents comparison between third and fourth academic year nursing students' on levels of clinical decision making. The table shows that there was no significant difference between third and fourth academic year nursing students' on their levels of on clinical decision making.

Table (6): Correlation between nursing students' professional value and their decision making (N=395).

Items of professional value	Collection		Process		Plan		Implementation		Total of clinical decision making	
	r	P	r	P	r	P	r	P	r	P
Total of professional value	0.160	0.001**	0.105	0.038*	0.034	0.505	0.016	0.757	0.104	0.038*
Caring	0.181	0.000**	0.081	0.108	0.040	0.427	0.027	0.588	0.134	0.008**
Professionalism	0.092	0.068*	0.052	0.156	0.053	0.290	0.001	0.979	0.052	0.300
Trust	0.118	0.019**	0.112	0.056*	0.018	0.271	0.056	0.266	0.092	0.067*
Justice	0.217	0.000**	0.088	0.079*	0.016	0.746	0.051	0.308	.125	0.013*
Activism	0.052	0.299	0.090	0.074*	0.086	0.180	0.019	0.707	0.139**	0.009

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level *****. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (6): displays correlation between nursing students' professional value and their decision making. This table shows that nursing students' total clinical decision making was significantly correlated with their total professional values .Also, significantly correlated with all dimensions of professional values except professionalism dimension was not significantly correlated with it. Collection stage of clinical decision making was significantly correlated with total of professional values and all dimensions of it except activism dimension was not significantly correlated with collection step of clinical decision making.

Also, processing stage of clinical decision making was significantly correlated with total of professional values and all dimensions of it except caring and professionalism dimension of professional values were not significantly correlated with it. Further, plan and implementation stages of clinical decision making were not significantly correlated with total of professional values and its dimensions.

VI. Discussion

Values are building blocks that shape life, life style and professions. The educational institutions have an important responsibility after the family to develop nursing students' values, attitudes and behaviors. Professional values operate as the structure for clinical decision-making and ethical practice and contribute to student's professional commitment ⁽²²⁾. According to American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2008) ⁽²³⁾, professional value is an essential element of undergraduate nursing education.

Nowadays nursing students will soon enter a healthcare. Their background infused with fast changing technology, widespread multiculturalism, difficult ethical situations, and new prospect for nurses⁽²⁴⁾. So, the aim of the study was to identify relationship between professional values and decision making among nursing students.

The finding of present study revealed that, more than fifty percent of nursing student had high level of professional values. This means that nursing students may be believed that professional values are important in nursing. Also they mostly internalized professional nursing values. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2008)⁽²³⁾ reported that the majority of individuals entering nursing profession have accepted that professional values are highly important in nursing, although they might not apply all the values equally in practice. This finding is agreed with result of Chisholm-Ford et al (2017)⁽²⁵⁾ who found that professional values were relatively high among the study participants.

Poorchangizi et al (2017)⁽²⁶⁾ showed that the total mean score of nurses' professional values was high. According to Kaya et al (2016)⁽²²⁾ majority of students had very high scores out of total nursing professional values. Chunxiang et al (2015)⁽²⁷⁾ found that the level of nursing professional values held by nursing students were high. On the other hand, this finding of the present study is disagree with the finding of Parvan et al (2012)⁽²⁸⁾ and Kantek et al (2015)⁽⁸⁾ who declared that nursing students had lower mean score of total nursing professional values.

According to Kaya et al (2016)⁽²²⁾, majority of nursing students had very high scores out of nursing professional values' subscales, and they stated that all items of nursing professional values are very important. Also, the present study finding identified that high percent of nursing students had high level of justice, trust, activism, professionalism, and caring professional value, respectively. This means that nursing students may be considered the five values as higher importance and demonstrated strong internalization of five values. Further, they may be aware that values such as caring, activism, trust, professionalism, justice have an effect on their interactions with patients and ultimately patient safety and outcomes.

Conversely, Pourama et al (2017)⁽²⁹⁾ concluded that the majority of students were not aware of the importance of some dimensions of professional values. Nurses need to be aware of their personal and professional values and at the same time be able to care for patients who have different values. Nurses professional values are significant because they influence the decisions made in caring for patients⁽²⁶⁾.

The present study finding showed that significant difference for total professional values of third and fourth academic year at ($p < 0.05$) especially significant difference in professionalism and activism. This was consistent with Lin et al (2010)⁽³⁰⁾ who found that total scores of the senior year of the nursing program were significantly higher than upon program entry. The students scored significantly higher on the 'professionalism' and 'activism' subscales at post-test than they did at pre-test. Professional values changed in a positive direction between the beginning of the student nurses' educational experience and their graduation.

On contrary, Aktaş and Karabulut (2017)⁽³¹⁾ had no statistically significant differences found between classes in terms of nursing students' professional values ($p > 0.05$). Similarly, in a study conducted by Bang et al. (2011)⁽²⁾, no difference was found in the total nursing professional value scores between sophomores and seniors. Al Shammari1 (2017)⁽¹⁴⁾ showed that there was no significant relationship between demographic profiles to their value systems on different patient care provisions and decisions during their clinical duties and employment as staff nurses.

The present study finding showed that, more than seventy percent of nursing student had moderate level of clinical decision making and there was no significant difference between third and fourth academic year nursing students' on their levels of on clinical decision making. This means that nursing students had flexible decision making/ both analytical and intuitive, depending on the situation, as described by Hammond's Cognitive Continuum Theory (CCT) posited that, as tasks become more difficult and/or the decision maker has less knowledge and experience, decision making becomes a more analytic process. Decisions can be retraced and justified because they are well thought out and mapped through knowledge and forethought. Conversely, if a task either requires a quick solution or is quite simplistic, and/or the decision maker has more knowledge and experience, decision making becomes a more intuitive process⁽²¹⁾.

Similar to Phillips (2015)⁽¹⁸⁾ who showed that three quarters of the participants scored in the quasi-rational range of clinical decision making, indicating they are flexible making decisions that are dependent on the situation at hand. Clinical experiences are important to beginning decision makers as it reinforced lessons and solidified concepts. Having opportunities to repeat skills and care for similar patients also increases the cues students receive. As they recognize more cues, they are better positioned to make quicker decisions without

having to systematically process everything. Because nursing care is dynamic and unpredictable, some situations have very little cues, regardless of the students (or nurse's) experience level. There were no statistically significant relationships between clinical decision making and the predictor variables of age, program type, previous degree/s, previous healthcare experience, or minority status.

The present study finding showed that nursing students' total clinical decision making was significantly correlated with their total professional values. Also, total clinical decision making was significantly correlated with all dimensions of professional values except professionalism dimension. This means that students' professional values have influenced clinical decision making and the way of taking care for the patient. This result is consistent with result of Hoffman (2004)⁽³²⁾ who found that nurses who holding a professional role value participated more in clinical decision making than those holding a paramedical role value.

VII. Conclusion

It can be concluded that:

-More than fifty percent of nursing student at Tanta Faculty of nursing had high level of professional values specifically; justice, trust, activism, professionalism, and caring professional value, respectively. While, more than seventy of them had moderate level of clinical decision making.

-There was significant difference between total professional values of nursing students in third and fourth academic year at ($p < 0.05$) especially significant difference in professionalism and activism. Also, there was no significant difference between third and fourth academic year nursing students' on their levels of clinical decision making.

-Nursing students' total clinical decision making was significantly correlated with their total professional values. Also, total clinical decision making significantly correlated with all dimensions of professional values except professionalism dimension was not significantly correlated with it.

VIII. Recommendation

In the light of the main study findings, the following recommendations are suggested that:

- Educators could facilitate involvement of students by adding action situations as part of nursing curriculum.
 - Nursing educators must provide more opportunities that allow students to experience more situations similar to clinical settings in order to enhance learning clinical decision making.
 - Nursing educators must pay more attention to infrastructure that supports the continued growth and enactment of professional values among nursing students
- Further studies should be conducted for professional values and clinical decision making.

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