

Importance of Professional Values in Nursing Practice: Nurses Perspective

Nemkholam Chongloi¹, Aditi Prashant², Anubha Devagourou³, Hansaram⁴

^{1,4}Tutor, ^{2,3}Associate Professor, College of Nursing, AIIMS, New Delhi.

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Abstract

Topic: Descriptive cross-sectional study on the Importance of professional values in Nursing Practice: Nurses Perspective

Objectives of the study: To investigate the importance of professional values in nursing practice from nurses' perspectives

Background: Professional values are vital components in nursing practice and nursing professionals need to be aware of these values as code of ethics to provide high-quality patient care. Nurses, as the largest health care group, have well-known and important professional values. The use of these values in nursing practice increased the quality of patients care, nurses' occupational satisfaction, their retention in nursing and commitment to the organization.

Methods: The present descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted from June to September 2023. The study was conducted among the nursing officers working in All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.

Result: Results showed that the mean total attitude score was 121.35±11.80 which denotes high importance of professional values among nurses. Protect health and safety of the patient was given the highest importance and participate in peer review was given the least importance.

Conclusion: The nurse educators and administrator needs to develop continuous educational programs to improve nurses' awareness and understanding of the importance of professional values and improve the quality of care.

Key words: Professional values, Nurses, Nursing practice

Introduction

Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping

health policy and in patient and health systems management, and education are also key nursing roles. (ICN, 2002)¹.

Clinical nursing is considered as the heart of a nurse's professional and the nurse must be competence enough to care for all types of patient². However, Nursing is not only caring for the sick, injured or old age people but with the expanding role

Corresponding Author: Aditi Prashant, Associate Professor, College of Nursing, AIIMS, New Delhi.

E-mail: aditiprashant@gmail.com

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of nurses in today's society it also involves a lot more than this. The professional responsibilities of a nurse include autonomy and accountability, caregiver, advocate, educator, communicator and also manager.

Nursing is deeply rooted with professional values and ethics and it is one of the most trusted professions. The principles in nursing includes preserving and promoting of human dignity, integrity, altruism, and providing justice that serve as a framework for standards, professional practice, and evaluation. Professional values are also mentioned in code of ethics and every newly registered nurse must follow and adhere to the code of ethics and code of professional conduct³. According to the International Council of Nurses, caring, activism, professionalism, trust, and justice are also included in the core nursing professional values⁴.

According to Houle 1980, Nursing is a profession which has the characteristics which includes Capacity to solve problems, Continued seeking of self-enhancement by its members, Formal training, Legal reinforcement of professional standards, Ethical practice, Role distinctions that differentiate professional work from that of other vocations and permit autonomous practice and Service to society⁵. To sum it up, Nurses is conscientious in actions, knowledgeable in the subject, and responsible to self and others.

Weis and Schank defined professional values as standards for action that are accepted by professional groups and individuals and are used to evaluate the integrity of the individual or organization. Professional values are rooted in personal values, which are influenced by family, culture, environment, religion, and ethnicity therefore professional values are necessary to reinforce individuals' the professional identity and performance⁶.

Professional values are important guidelines that is used to enhance and motivate the professional nurses⁷ and also to evaluate the behavior and integrity of the Nurses⁸.

Material and Methods

Setting:

The present descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted from June to September 2023. The study

was conducted among the nursing officers working in All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.

Sample/participants

The target population included all nurses employed at various departments of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. Using the sample size formula, convenient sampling technique was used to collect the information from 207 nursing officers working in All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. Inclusion Criteria for the study are Nurses working in AIIMS, New Delhi, Nurses who are involved in direct care of the patient, Nurses who have more than 6 months of clinical experience and Nurses who are willing to participate and sign informed written consent.

Measurement tool and data collection:

Data was collected using a two-section questionnaire. The first section consist of participants' demographic characteristics including age, gender, religion, marital status, educational qualification ,designation, type of employment, working experience and participation in professional ethical training.

The NPVS-R is a psychometrically sound instrument for measuring professional nurses' values and enhancing professional socialization. The Nurses Professional Values Scale--Revised (NPVS-R) is an instrument derived from the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nurses designed to measure nurses' professional values⁹. The NPVS-R includes 26 items with a Likert-scale format in five dimensions: 1) trust: 5 items, 2) justice: 3 items, 3) professionalism: 4 items, 4) activism: 5 items, and 5) caring: 9 items.

The participants specified the importance of each item on a Likert 5-point scale ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 =not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important, and 5=the most important. The possible range of scores is 26 to 130. In this study, the scores below 43, scores between 43 and 86, and those above 86 were considered low importance, moderate, and high importance, respectively. A higher score indicates that professional values are very important, and that nurses are more oriented toward stronger professional values.

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The questionnaire was administered to 207 nursing officers working in different wards after explaining how to fill the questionnaire as well as defining the research objectives. They were asked to choose their own degree of agreement or disagreement of each statement or adjective from their personal experience. To achieve the same perception

of the questionnaire's items and eliminate any kind of ambiguity concerning answering the questions for all the nurses, the researcher provided the participants with necessary explanations and then collected the questionnaires with maintaining confidentiality.

The Cronbach's alphas was used to measure the validity of the tool and the reliability of the tool ($r=0.86$) will be established through test-retest method among 20 nurses.

Statistical analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics chisquare. Level of significance was considered $P < 0.05$.

Results of the Study

Table 1: Total score range of the Professional values in nursing practice

	Mean \pm SD	Minimum	Maximum
Total attitude score	121.35 SD \pm 11.80	75	130

Results showed that the mean total attitude score was 121.35 \pm 11.80 which denotes high importance of professional values among nurses.

Table 2: Association of demographic variables with professional values total score category using Chi square test.

Variables	N (%)	Chi square value	Df	P value
Age				
20-30	99 (47.8 %)	4.066	4	.397
31-40	82 (39.6%)			
41-50	26 (12.6%)			
Gender				
Male	51 (24.6%)	22.179	2	.000
Female	156 (75.4%)			
Religion				
Christian	57 (27.5 %)	6.029	8	.644
Hindu	138 (66.7%)			
sikh	1 (0.5%)			
Muslim	6 (2.9%)			
Others	5 (2.4%)			

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Marital				
Married	116 (56%)	3.626	2	.163
Unmarried	91 (44%)			
Educational qualification				
Diploma	50 (24.2%)			
Graduate	137 (66.2%)	2.914	6	.820
Postgraduate	18 (8.7%)			
Doctorate	2 (1%)			
Designation				
Nursing officer	177 (85.5%)	2.310	2	.315
Senior Nursing Officer	30 (14.5%)			
Type of job				
Contractual	46 (22.2%)	7.728	2	.021
Permanent	161 (77.8%)			
Working experience				
1-5 years	50 (24.2%)			
6-10 years	51 (24.6%)	7.087	8	.527
11-15 years	31 (15%)			
16-20 years	42 (20.3%)			
>20 years	33 (15.9%)			
Any training				
Yes	97 (46.9%)	4.829	2	.089
No	110 (53.1%)			

Table 3: NPVS-3 statements shows the item rank and mean scores of nursing professional values

Dimension	Items	Rank	Mean	SD
Trust	Engage in ongoing self-evaluation	15	4.22	0.660
	Engage in consultation/collaboration to provide optimal care and meet patient needs	17	4.17	0.686
	Seek additional education to update knowledge and skills to provide best care	8	4.34	0.699
	Accept responsibility and accountability for own practice	5	4.49	0.547
	maintain competency in area of practice	9	4.33	0.674
Justice	Protect health and safety of the patient	1	4.65	0.526
	Promote equitable access to nursing and healthcare	14	4.25	0.753
	Assume responsibility for meeting health needs of diverse populations	16	4.18	0.684

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Professionalism	Participate in peer review	20	4.09	0.761
	Establish standards as a guide for practice	7	4.37	0.677
	Promote and maintain standards where planned learning activities for students take place	9	4.33	0.646
	Initiate actions to improve environments of practice	14	4.25	0.686
Activism	Participate in public policy decisions affecting distribution of resources	6	4.38	0.586
	Advance the profession through active involvement in health-related activities	8	4.34	0.609
	Recognize the role of professional nursing associations in shaping health policy	13	4.26	0.695
	Participate in nursing research and/or implement research findings appropriate to practice	14	4.25	0.720
	Participate in activities of professional nursing associations	12	4.27	0.684
Caring	Protect moral and legal rights of patients	2	4.64	0.565
	Refuse to participate in care if in ethical opposition to own professional values	19	4.13	0.829
	Act as a patient advocate	11	4.28	0.722
	Provide care without bias or prejudice to patients and populations	4	4.50	0.667
	Safeguard patient's right to privacy	2	4.64	0.548
	Confront practitioners with questionable or inappropriate practice	18	4.14	0.783
	Protect rights of participants in research	7	4.37	0.683
	Practice guided by principles of fidelity and respect for person	10	4.32	0.701
	Maintain confidentiality of patient	3	4.56	0.643

Table 2: A total of 207 nurses have completed the NPVS-3 questionnaire. Majority (57.8%) of the Nurses were between age group of 20 to 30 years, 39.6% were of 31 to 40 years and 12.6% were between 41-50 years.

The majority (75.4%) of the participants were female whereas only 24.6% were male nurse.

Majority (66.7%) of the participants belongs to Hindu, 27.5 % Christian, 2.9% Muslim, 2.4% others and only 0.5% Sikh.

More than half of the participants 56% were married and 44% were unmarried. Majority 66.2% of the participants were graduate who had Bachelor's degree in nursing and 1% had doctorate degree in nursing.

Majority (85.5%) of the Nurses who participated in the study were Nursing Officers , and most of the

participants 24.6% have 6 to 10 years of experience in caring for the patient. In addition, 77.8% were permanent employees of the hospital. Majority 53.1% of the participant had participated in professional ethical training courses.

The professional value score was associated with the gender and types of employment of the nursing officers ($P=>.001$), whereas professional value scores was independent of age, religion, marital status, educational qualification, designation, working experience and any professional value training the nursing officers had undergone.

Table 3 in NPVS-3 statements shows the item rank and mean scores of nursing professional values. The high mean score of the professional values of the nursing students indicated high awareness and perception of the importance of professional values

from the students' perspective. The most important values as identified by higher mean scores and were given a rank accordingly. Based on the mean score, the most important values from the nurses perspective were "Protect health and safety of the patient" 4.65 ± 0.526 from justice dimension, "Protect moral and legal rights of patients" 4.64 ± 0.565 , "Safeguard patient's right to privacy" 4.64 ± 0.548 , "Maintain confidentiality of patient" 4.56 ± 0.643 from caring dimension whereas "Participate in peer review" 4.09 ± 0.761 from professionalism dimension gained the lowest importance as the mean score was lesser.

Discussion

The aimed of the present study was to investigate the importance of professional values from nurse's perspective. The fundamental responsibility of nurses is to provide safe care, justice and cultivate trust through our care. The present study reported the highest score in domain of justice "Protecting the health and safety of the patient" (mean score of 4.65 ± 0.526 SD).

Caring is the heart and core of nurses professional values. Findings of this study conclude that nurses have high professional values in caring domains too. Vijayalakshmi Poreddi also reported that nurses hold high professional and ethical values which were prioritized from the nurses perspective as Caring¹⁰.

The other domains in which the nurses have high regards include "Safeguard patient's right to privacy", "Protect moral and legal rights of patients", "Maintain confidentiality of patient", "Provide care without bias or prejudice to patients and populations".

On the other hand, the item under professionalism domain "Participate in peer review" received the lowest rating. The same findings were also reported by poorchangizi¹¹.

Similar Study conducted in Iran¹² concluded that participating in peer review is the duties of the managers and performance evaluation is conducted by the nurse managers and the staff nurse are not involved in peer review or evaluation. The same organization pattern is also followed in AIIMS hospital. Hence the mangers also should take the opinion of the staff nurse while performing a peer review. It is also highly recommended that to

promote the nursing profession, nurses should be actively involved in policymaking.

The other low rated items include "Refuse to participate in care if in ethical opposition to own professional values", "Confront practitioners with questionable or inappropriate practice", "Engage in consultation/collaboration to provide optimal care and meet patient needs", "Assume responsibility for meeting health needs of diverse populations". Similar findings were reported by Rabia S Allari that nursing issues outside nurse client relationship such as participate in peer review, refuse to participate in care if in ethical opposition to own professional values, confront practitioners with questionable or inappropriate practice were perceived as less important by the nurses. Therefore there is an urgent need to create awareness by organizing seminars and conference among the Nurses to review the importance of the less valued domain in the present study finding are also equally important in the nursing profession¹³.

The nurse educators and administrators should develop continuous educational programs to improve nurses' awareness and understanding of the importance of professional values and thereby improve the quality of care. All the domains in the professional values are equally important.

In this study there was a significant relationship between the gender and score of professional values. The differences could be due to male and female nurse ratio. The recruitment of male nurse is only 20% and female is 80%. Female have more of caring and empathetic nature and attitude while males are portrayed as less emotional and more cognitive¹⁴.

There is also a significant differences in the types of employment. Since majority of the Nurses were permanent employee of the institute, they have more responsibilities and accountability towards their patient.

Dissimilar to other study, the present study does not have any significant differences in terms of working experience, (poorchangizi et al¹¹).

It is also in contrast to Clarks study where the score of professional values were enhanced with the increased in nurse's experience¹⁵.

Leduc and kotzer also demonstrated that there were no significant differences between the working experience and professional values¹⁶. Surprisingly, unlike many studies, the present study reported that there were also no significant differences between the score between nurses who has participated in professional ethical training on the professional value as compared to not participated nurses.

Conclusion

The professional values related to direct nursing care is given higher rank and more importance as compared to non clinical duties. The nurses should be given awareness about the importance of the non clinical care so that the overall professional values are valued and practice in daily care of the patient and thereby improve the overall quality care of the patient. There is also a need to allow the nurses to be actively involved in policymaking. The nurse educators and administrators also need to develop continuous educational programs to improve nurses' awareness and understanding of the importance of professional values and improve the quality of care.

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Conflict of interest: Nil

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