

Nursing Professionalism Training (NURS-PRONING) to Improve Professional Behaviour and Identity among Nursing Students In Malaysia

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Abstract. Professionalism is a crucial aspect of professional health education because impacting on patient safety and quality of health services. However, teaching professionalism in nursing education is still rare. A recent study found that confusion between learning and assessment professionalism and training session. Lack of professionalism is common problem among Indonesian and Malaysian nursing students as it is difficult to define, teach and assess. The aim of this study was to assess the effect of nursing professionalism training (NURS-PRONING) on students' professional behavior and identity. The study was carried out at Nursing Department, University of Malaya, Malaysia with 56 students who participated in this program. The procedure of training has been developed by literatures related professionalism teaching and consisted of nine learning activities that innovative using interactive teaching skills and integrated with technology. The professional behavior has been measured using Nursing Students Professional Behavior Scale (NSPBS) twice in pre-test and post-test. Then, the student nurses draw the professional identity in the module of training. The data analysis of this study was used statistical software and thematic content analysis. The finding showed that professional behavior after training improve significantly compared to before training. The drawing analysis of professional identity found five themes, including appearances, personality, roles of nurses, skills and self-perception. The result showed that 56 students nurses have significantly improved in professional behavior and can describe their professional identity.

1 Introduction

Professionalism is a complex subject matter with a lack of consensus and ambiguities, making it difficult to define, teach and assess (1-3). Curriculum development about

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professionalism is needed to prepare nursing students to have personal resilience and adaptability for the transition from academic stage into complex practices of professional life (3, 4). Students experience lack of professional socialization in clinical education due to inadequate orientation program and lack of guidance by clinical preceptor that resulted in anxiety, confusion and reality shock (5). Furthermore, students often struggle to understand the purpose and meaning of professionalism, and traditional assessment methods only focus on knowledge and understanding (3).

Professionalism and professional behavior are the core of competencies and the central of education for healthcare professionals (6). Professionalism often domain-specific, leading to a lack of knowledge sharing between different professions (3). Research in medical, dentistry, midwifery, physical therapy, and resident education emphasizes the importance of teaching and measuring professionalism (6, 7). However, research on undergraduate approaches for develop and assessment for professionalism in nursing and medical education is limited (6). In contrast, a study on European hospitals' physicians and nurses revealed high professionalism levels and they were more involved in quality improvement and reported underperformance or medical errors of staff. This highlights the importance of fostering professionalism in healthcare (8).

Professionalism is the core curriculum and core competencies in professional health education that impact on patient safety, satisfaction and quality of healthcare services (1). Professionalism in nursing is a complex concept that involves knowledge, specialization, intellectual abilities, and a sense of responsibility. It is a process of professional socialization where individuals acquire and internalize knowledge, skills, culture, attitudes, values, and nursing ethics (9). Professional socialization outcomes is achieving professional competence, shaping professional behavior and strengthen professional identity for nursing students (4). Professional behavior in nursing involves cognitive, attitudinal, and psychomotor dimensions, focusing on ethical principles, knowledge, skills, autonomy, collaboration, and altruism. It requires culturally sensitive teaching methods and a solid strategy (10). The benefit of professional behavior is to build good relationships, ensure the patient's safety and patient satisfaction.

Undergraduate professional education as the human services education focuses on developing professionalism, emotional handling, decision-making, and discretion. However, a study in Sweden reveals confusion between learning and assessment, ambiguity in training sessions, and teachers prioritizing constructive learning over assessment (3). Furthermore, professional education institutions can improve students commitment in their profession through strengthening professional identity, developing policies, providing opportunities, and creating a supportive organizational atmosphere (11). Nurses' self-concept and professional identity are influenced by education, experience, work values, and public image. Strong professional identity will impacts job satisfaction, retention, and self-confidence among nursing students and nurses (12). The role nurse educator in teaching professionalism is vital. Integrating a professionalism-training course into undergraduate professional education curriculum can enhance learners' subject matter awareness and application, based on constructivism experiential learning theory, serving as a template for other competencies and schools (13). Furthermore, evidence suggests incorporating core nursing values like altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, honesty, and social justice into nursing education to ensure patient safety and trust (14).

In Malaysia, there is a lack of focus on forming professional behavior and identity, particularly in nursing. This also lack of teaching professionalism that differentiates nursing from other health professions as well as self-assessment on professionalism. This study developed namely Nursing professionalism training / NURS-PRONING is an innovative educational intervention to teach nursing professionalism that developed by Socialization Professional Reality Integration in Nursing Student Transition (SPRINT) (4) and

Professionalism Learning Journey Model (13). This training model is designed to construct the learning activities during training that with technologies. This training also measures professional behaviour level twice using Nursing Students Professional Behaviour Scale (NSPBS) before and after training. Thus, this study aim to assess the effect of nursing professionalism training (NURS-PRONING) on students' professional behavior and identity in University of Malaya.

2 Methodology

In this first activity of the study is the development of model training using Socialization Professional Reality Integration in Nursing Student Transition (SPRINT) (4) and Professionalism Learning Journey Model (13). Then, the author develop module for professionalism training course guidelines for nursing students from University of Malaya in collaboration with service members from Nursing Department University of Malaya.

Study activities were carried out in classroom Nursing Department University of Malaya in second floor on 7th March 2024. The target was 56 nursing students all of grade in Nursing Department, University of Malaya. The first procedure for the study was coordination with the Head of Nursing Department of University of Malaya on the training activities to be carried out. The learning activities of NURS-PRONING consisted of nine step, including 1) Pre-test professional behavior; 2) Ice-breaking; 3) Interactive lecturer to connecting with nursing professionalism problem; 4) Case scenario discussion/ peer learning; 5) Presentation result of discussion; 6) Watching video transition from nursing students become professional nurse; 7) Question and answer session; 8) Drawing professional identity; 9) Post-test professional behaviour and 10) Evaluation. The learning methods that was used included power-point, peer learning, experiential learning, discussion, video, simulation and role-play. The UM students have active participation during the training. The students got module professionalism training in nursing and rewards, such as tumbler.

The last stage is evaluation that crucial for optimizing and improving educational activities in training. Before implementing any learning activity, it's important to prioritise it (15). The evaluation of nursing professionalism training was done using Kirkpatrick's methods. The Kirkpatrick model is widely used in evaluating medical training, computer science, business, and social sciences, demonstrating its adaptability and high performance in various training environments (16). Some training and development professionals believe that evaluation means measuring changes in behavior that occur because of training program. Kirkpatrick was implemented in four levels to evaluate the training. The four levels represent a sequence of ways to evaluate programs, including four levels: Level 1: Reaction; Level 2: Learning; Level 3: Behavior; and Level 4: Results. Recent studies show that this framework of Kirkpatrick is useful as the comprehensive tools for evaluating training (15). In this study, the participants evaluate training using in the G-form to assess the training and the ability of trainer to transfer knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior related nursing professionalism. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS™ 22 version (IBM Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) and the drawing professional identity using thematic content analysis. The Paired Sample t test was used to measure the difference professional behavior score before and after training. Furthermore, the analysis of professional identity drawing in nursing guided by Browne and Spouse (12, 17) and the thematic content analysis was used in this study.

3 Results and Discussion

The student nurses who attended the training in total is 56 students from Nursing Department, University of Malaya. The Kirkpatrick method is used to evaluate the training program. The

total number of student nurses present at the training was 56. There are two types of training evaluation included reaction evaluation and learning evaluation. The reaction evaluation was assessed using Google Form namely trainer evaluation. The result can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Trainer evaluation based on participants' review

Trainer evaluation	Excellent	Good	Average	Low
1. Clarity of conveying the material	80%	0%	0%	0%
2. Ability to motivate participants	80%	0%	0%	0%
3. Ability to use teaching media	80%	0%	0%	0%
4. Communication skills	86.5%	0%	0%	0%

Table 1 shows that the majority of student nurses rated the material in training activities as excellent with 80% and above. It shows that the trainer NURS-PRONING can teach nursing professionalism clearly. However, they gave several suggestions, such as using outdoor activities during training, create more attractive slides , more live video experiences, and provide simple sharing session about nursing professionalism.

Table 2. Professional behavior using Nursing Student Professional Behavior (NSPBS) before and after training (n=56)

Professional Behaviour				
Before training		After Training		p
Min-Max	Mean±SD	Min-max	Mean±SD	
49.00-135.00	118.10±16.34	108.00-135.00	130.98±7.86	0.000

Note: *p<0.05 based on Paired t-test

Table 2 shows that there was significantly increase in professional behaviour after training NURS-PRONING (p=0.000). The measurement was used NSPBS which is valid and reliable tool for self-assessment in professional behaviour.

Nursing students in UM can describe their professional identity clearly. The participant draw their professional identity with attributes in three category such as female nurse, male nurse, and others. First category for female nurse using hijab and cap with long skirt or long trousers for Muslim, while Non-Muslim they draw female nurse with short uniform, using cap cross in the head, tidy hair or no cap. Second category for male nurse, they draw male professional nurse with tidy hair and uniform. Third category is other where the participant draw, such as diamond, house with tree, squid, heart, provide support and nursing tools like injection, stethoscope, medication, and healthy food.

Table 3. Analysis of Professional Identity among UM Nursing Students based on their drawing

N o	Theme	Sub-Theme	Categories
1	Appearances	Positive appearances	using Identity card (33), tuck in hijab (21), tidy attire/neat (20), using stethoscope (10), using glasses (3), medication (3), injection (3), bring nursing bag (2), short nails (2), comfy shoes (2), tidy hair (2), smells good (1)

		Negative appearances	Tired (2), eye tired (2), hungry (1), sleepy (1), many assignments (1), and many exam (1)
2	Personality	Good personality	Kind/ always smile/ friendly (25), responsible (22), empathy (22), knowledgeable (20), caring (13), confident (11), competent (11), punctual (9), compassionate (9), be patience (9), love (5), strong (5), good heart (3), honest (3), active (3), hardworking (2), passionate (2), energize (2), brave (2), peaceful (1), protection (1), calm (1), polite (1), humanistic (1), helpful (1), excellent (1)
3	Skills	Skill attributes	communicative (9), being professional (9), multitasking (7), ensure confidentiality (6), respect (5), good time management (4), collaborator (4), observant (3), positive thinking (3), adaptive (3), good balancing work and life (2), safety/ reduce error (2), altruism (2), transcultural nursing (2), good leadership skills (2), life long learning (2), good decision making (2), good relationship (1), good preparation in tools (1), authority (1), patient centered care (1), good hand hygiene (1), obey code of ethic (1)
4	Role of nurses		Advocator (3), educator/teacher (3), efficient nursing care (3), manager (1), communicator (1), coordinator (1),
5	Self-perception		Hand of angle (3), I am a good nurse (2), Pediatric nurse (1), clear identity as student (1), I am virtuous (1), values and belief (1), UM (1), ICU nurse (1), I'm too short to hang IV !! (1), I'm inspired (1), I'm empowered (1)

Table 3 shows that drawing analysis of professional identity, it can divided into five themes, namely appearances, personality, roles of nurses, skills and self-perception. Every theme consisted of attributes of professional nurse. The first theme is appearances with two sub-themes, including positive appearances like using Identity Card, hijab, etc; while negative appearances, such as tired, sleepy, etc. Second theme is personality that consisted of one sub-theme is good personality, such as kind, responsible, empathy, knowledgeable, etc. Third theme is skill with sub-theme is skill attributes, such as communicative, being professional, multitasking, etc. Four theme is role of nurses, such as advocator, educator, manager, etc. The last theme is self-perception, such as hand of angle, I am a good nurse, etc.

Training is one technique for teaching professionalism in nursing education that important to improve the active participation of the participant. Recent study found that integrating a professionalism-training course into an undergraduate medical curriculum boosts learners' awareness, appreciation, and application of subject matter. This approach, rooted in constructivism experiential learning theory, fosters self-directed learning and can serve as a template for other competencies and schools (13). Professionalism is essential

aspect to teach as it can ensure the excellent performance, patient safety, and patient satisfaction in healthcare services especially professional behavior (1, 2, 18). Furthermore, nursing professionalism is a crucial foundation in clinical nursing, focusing on caring, altruism, and professionalism (19).

According to International Council of Nurses and American Nurses association, professionalism is the core professional values in nursing practice Evidence-based literature suggests incorporating core nursing values like altruism, autonomy, human dignity, integrity, honesty, and social justice into nursing education to maintain patient safety and trust, emphasizing the need for deliberate integration of professionalism into pre-licensure education (14).

This study results demonstrate that significantly improve professional behavior after training among nursing students in UM and they can describe the strong professional identity as nurse. They also send information about personal brand image that will communicate through professional appearances, such as UM uniform, identity card both female and male students. For female Muslim students, their identity also using hijab, while non-Muslim with tidy hair and cap. In addition, the male students majority draw male nurse with neat UM uniform complete with professional attributes. Nursing professionalism training (NURS-PRONING) is an innovative teaching strategies that significantly increase develop professional behavior level and strengthen professional identity through self-assessment.

4 Conclusions

This study examined the effect of nursing professionalism training (NURS-PRONING) on students' professional behavior and identity. The findings from the study showed that student professional behavior and personal nursing identity improved after training. The drawing analysis of professional identity found five themes, including appearances, personality, roles of nurses, skills and self-perception. The results showed that the student nurses have significantly improved in professional behavior and can describe their professional identity. However, this study also has some limitations: the sample was quite small, therefore future research should evaluate the effect of the training using larger sample size. Implications of this study is that nursing professional behavior and identity is a crucial part in nursing education. The findings from this study imply that nursing education institutions should include students' nurse professional behavior and identity training or courses in their curriculum in order to create professional nurses' graduates.

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