Professional self-concept and caring perception in nursing students

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Abstract. This is descriptive research to investigate professional self-concept and caring perception among nursing students and determine correlation between them. A total of 161 nursing students having performed no clinical practice participated in this study and they were 19.7±1.6 years old on average. Professional self-concept and caring perception scored 92.94±12.28 and 163.00±18.06, respectively, on average and they were significantly positively correlated with each other (r=.347, p<.001). On the basis of these results, research on professional self-concept and caring perception among nursing students is expected to provide an opportunity to improve nursing profession at its early stages and to support the demand for learning about nursing. It is also expected to establish solid concepts of nursing profession and caring, which is fundamental to nursing, and contribute to the improvement of nursing.

Keywords: professional self-concept, caring perception, nursing student

1 Introduction

With the changing concept of health, it is necessary to promote positive relationships between a nurse and a patient and provide qualitative caring with the objective of providing high-quality medical service. To provide professional service based on advanced knowledge, experiences, and technology to meet such a demand, nurses need to establish a positive image as a professional [1] and correctly perceive the attributes of caring, which has traditionally been considered essential to nursing [2]. It is important to establish a positive professional self-concept in order to do their jobs effectively as a professional nurse in clinical area with healthcare professionals [3, 4]. Although professional self-concept is an important factor to improve nursing profession in every aspect, domestic researchers have explored it among nurses or determined its association with relevant variables. However, little research has been conducted on the association between caring perception and professional self-concept among several relevant factors. Caring is a central concept in expressing the originality of nursing as profession [5]. As a personal relationship between a nurse and a patient, caring is intellectual, developmental, and central to nursing practice and...
research on nursing belief, values, and practice can help discover and predict signs of health and well-beings of the patient. If the attributes and principles of caring are applied to professional nursing, it would contribute to more satisfactory nursing [6]. This study aimed to investigate professional self-concept and caring perception among nursing students and determine the association among these variables. The ultimate goal is to improve the perception of caring and professional awareness and contribute to the qualitative improvement of nursing.

2 Method

2.1 Design

This is descriptive research to assess professional self-concept and caring perception and determine correlation between them among nursing students.

2.2 Subjects

Convenience sampling was made with nursing students in Seoul who had performed no clinical practice, understood the purpose of this study, and agreed to participate in the research. The number of subjects was determined using a G*Power3.1.2 program and 161 out of 169 nursing students were finally analyzed, with the exception of 8 giving insincere responses.

2.3 Instrument

Professional self-concept was examined with a total of 30 items in three areas: professional practice, satisfaction, and communication. Each item had a four-point scale: the scores ranged from 30 to 120, with a higher score meaning a higher level of professional self-concept. For reliability, Cronbach’s alpha was .937.

The instrument to measure caring perception consisted of 42 items in the five-point scale: the scores ranged from 42 to 210, with a higher score meaning a higher level of caring perception. For reliability, Cronbach’s alpha was .918.

2.4 Data collection and ethical consideration

Data were collected with the approval of the Institutional Review Board in H University. With the ethical aspect taken into account, the participants were given explanation of the specific purpose and methods of the study; then, those agreeing to participate in the research were given full explanation of anonymity, confidentiality, and discontinuation of participation in the research and a self-directed survey was conducted in the subjects giving a sign from September to December 2013.
2.5 Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using an SPSS Win 19.0 program.

3 Results

3.1 General characteristics of subjects

94.4% of the participants were female and 5.6% were male; 42.9% were freshmen and 57.1% were sophomores. The mean age was 19.7±1.6 years. The most frequent motive for choosing the department of nursing was their own will (41.6%), followed by guaranteed employment (29.2%) and recommendation by others (16.8%).

3.2 Professional self-concept and caring perception of subjects

They scored higher than the mean for professional self-concept: 92.94±12.28 on average. They scored lowest for I will work as a nursing professional through life (2.59±.92) and highest for nursing is characterized by much higher levels of ethical consciousness than other types of profession (3.49±.69) on average.

They scored high for caring perception: 163.00±18.06 on average. They scored highest for I think I care for patients sincerely as a nurse when I establish a sense of reliability with them (4.36±.77) and lowest for a responsible nurse cannot keep the balance between personal needs and the professional duty of providing qualitative nursing to patients (2.70±1.19) on average.

3.3 Correlation between professional self-concept and caring perception

Professional self-concept was statistically significantly positively correlated with caring perception (r=.347, p<.001)

4 Conclusions

This research explored professional self-concept and caring perception among nursing students performing no clinical practice. They scored higher than the mean for both professional self-concept and caring perception and the positive correlation between these factors implies that caring perception may affect professional self-concept. To induce them to become more satisfied with their major and take greater pride in nursing profession, therefore, it is necessary to give them education and support continuously so that they can get positive professional self-concept and caring perception.
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Reference