

Ethical and Social Values of the Senior Class Nursing Students

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Abstract

Introduction: Schools contribute to the development of moral values and professional ethics by helping students achieve cognitive and emotional goals with methods that are not included in the school curriculum.

Aim: The aim of the study was to determine the ethical and social values of the senior class of nursing undergraduate students and to demonstrate the association between them.

Method: This study was carried out on the 4th year undergraduate students in the Department of Nursing of the university's Faculty of Health Sciences in Düzce in Turkey. In this cross-sectional descriptive study, 160 nursing undergraduate students were selected as the sample. Data were collected between October and December 2017 using a socio-demographic characteristics form as well as a "Predisposition to Ethical Values Scale" and a "Multidimensional Social Values Scale".

Results: The total score average of the nursing students' ethical values and the multidimensional social values was 68.56 ± 9.75 and 163.46 ± 15.97 , respectively. There was a moderate positive statistical significant relationship between predisposition to ethical values and multidimensional social values ($p < 0.01$, $r: 0.502$).

Conclusion: The total scores and the subscale mean scores of the nursing students for the scales of "predisposition to ethical values" and "multidimensional social values" were found to be high. There was a moderate positive association between predisposition to ethical values and multidimensional social values. These results show that social and ethical values play an important role in the professional decision-making and behaviour of nursing students.

Keywords: ethical values, nursing students, social values

Introduction

The value can be defined as "the overall understanding, attitude, beliefs and principles that are important for an individual, and are developed by the individual in response to the material and spiritual circumstances" (Bolat, 2016, p. 325). One of the responsibilities of the school is to contribute to the development of moral values and professional ethics through teaching values to students (Akbaş, 2008; Bolat, 2016). Values education is more about emotional education (Meydan, 2014). In Fidan's (2009) study with preservice teachers, carrying out activities that enable students to explain their own values, watching films or theatres emphasizing values, taking part in social projects where students can apply these values, and observing these values in society and at school was suggested. Values and ethical rules guide the formation of professional ethical behaviours (Bolat, 2016). Dalcalı and Şendir (2016) found that nurses primarily emphasized political and moral values and that ethical sensitivity of personal value choices affected their level of ethical sensitivity. Rassin (2008) determined that in his study, the first three personal values of nurses were honesty, responsibility, and intelligence. In nursing graduates, professional values were found to be related to

gender and ethnicity (Martin, Yarbrough, & Alfred, 2003). The identification of the nursing students' social values, shaped together with their families and cultures, can make an important contribution to the formation of professional ethics education content. Nursing students should be aware of their social and ethical values while carrying out their professional roles and should be able to use these values together with their professional values. It is important to regulate nursing undergraduate education in a way that nursing students can realize their social and ethical values.

Aim

This study was carried out to determine the ethical and social values of the senior class undergraduate nursing students and to demonstrate the association between them.

Method

Type of the study

This study was planned as a cross-sectional descriptive study to test the association between variables.

Research questions

Research questions were defined as:

At what level are the ethical and social values of senior class nursing students?

Is there a relationship between the ethical and social values of senior class nursing students?

The sample

This study was carried out on 4th year undergraduate students in the Department of Nursing of the university's Faculty of Health Sciences in Düzce in Turkey. One hundred ninety nursing students studying in their 4th academic year (2017–2018) were enrolled to participate in the study. One hundred sixty nursing students that agreed to participate in the study formed the sample. The participation rate in the study was 84% and the rate of non-participation was 16%. The study results can be generalized to this sample and the data were collected between October and December 2017.

Procedure

The students were contacted at the end of the semester or during their internship applications with the permission of the instructors. The implementation of the questionnaire took 15 minutes on average.

Data collection tools

In the study, the socio-demographic characteristics form, Predisposition to Ethical Values Scale, and Multidimensional Social Values Scale, which were prepared by the researcher in the light of literature information, were used as the data collection tools.

Predisposition to Ethical Values Scale: The scale created by Kaya (2015) was used to determine the extent to which individuals had ethical values that they were supposed to possess. It had three sub-dimensions as love, justice, and cooperation. The scale was a measure of 16 items explaining 61.93% of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.90. The scale was Likert-type 5 and the scale items were formed in the form of "1" Strongly disagree, "2"

Disagree, “3” Neither agree nor disagree, “4” Agree, “5” Strongly agree (Kaya, 2015). In this study, for example, the Cronbach’s Alpha value was found to be 0.92.

Multidimensional Social Values Scale: The scale created by Bolat (2013) was a five-point Likert-type scale and consisted of 42 items. There were 6 dimensions of social values such as family values (valuing the family and the place of the women in the family), scientific values (being scientific and being critical), work-business values (responsibility and competitiveness), religious values (worship, honour, piety, benevolence), traditional values (trustworthiness, helpfulness, prudence, health and cleanliness), political values (trust in the state, respect for political preferences, participation, commitment to the state). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency values related to the reliability of the subscales that constituted the scale were found as “0.71, 0.73, 0.78, 0.72, 0.70, and 0.76” (Bolat, 2013). In this study, the Cronbach’s alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.86.

Evaluation of the data

The SPSS 18.0 software was used in the evaluation of the data. Descriptive statistics and Pearson’s correlation analyses were used.

Results

As shown in Table 1, 74.4% of the students that participated in the survey were females. In addition, 82.5% of the students had nuclear families, 56.9% of the students’ mothers were primary school graduates, and 45.6% of the fathers were primary school graduates. Finally, 78.1% of the students perceived their school achievements as at a moderate level. The average age of the students was 21.75 ± 1.38 .

Tab. 1 Descriptive characteristics of students (Duzce, 2017)

	Variables (n = 160)	n	%
Gender	Woman	119	74.4
	Male	41	24.6
Family structure	Nuclear family	132	82.5
	Extended family	26	16.3
	Fragmented Family	2	1.3
Mother's Education Level	Not Literate	15	9.4
	Literate	8	5.0
	Primary school graduate	91	56.9
	Secondary school graduate	26	16.3
	High school graduate	19	11.9
	Graduated from a University	1	0.6
Father's Education Level	Not Literate	4	2.5
	Literate	3	1.9
	Primary school graduate	73	45.6
	Secondary school graduate	28	17.5
	High school graduate	38	23.8
	Graduated from a University	14	8.8
School success	Low	9	5.6
	Middle	125	78.1
	High	26	16.3
Age (Mean ± SD) (Min-Max)		(21.75 +/- 1.38)	(19–30)

As shown in Table 2, the total score average of the nursing students' predisposition to ethical values scale and the multidimensional social values of nursing students were found as 68.56 ± 9.75 and 163.46 ± 15.97 , respectively. There was no significant difference in the comparison of the Multidimensional Social Values and Ethical Values Scale point averages according to gender and family structure.

Tab. 2 Features of the scales used (Duzce, 2017)

Scales (n = 160)	Mean ± Standard deviation	Minimum–Maximum
Predisposition to Ethical Values		
1. Love Sub-dimension	35.24 ± 4.75	8–40
2. Justice Sub-dimension	21.42 ± 3.69	5–25
3. Collaboration Sub-dimension	11.90 ± 2.45	3–15
Total Points	68.56 ± 9.75	16–80
Multidimensional Social Values		
1. Family Values Sub-dimension	23.68 ± 2.63	13–29
2. Scientific Values Sub-dimension	23.45 ± 3.33	12–30
3. Working-Professional Values Sub-dimension	30.89 ± 4.05	18–40
4. Religious Values Sub-dimension	25.96 ± 3.51	12–30
5. Traditional Values Sub-dimension	25.78 ± 3.07	13–30
6. Political Values Sub-dimension	33.68 ± 3.94	21–45
Total Points	163.46 ± 15.97	92–195

According to Table 3, there is a moderate and statistically significant relationship between the predisposition to ethical values and multidimensional social values ($p < 0.01$, $r: 0.502$).

Tab. 3 Relationship between students' predisposition to ethical values and multidimensional social values scores (Duzce, 2017)

Scales	Predisposition to Ethical Values Scale	Multidimensional Social Values Scale
Predisposition to Ethical Values Scale	1	
Multidimensional Social Values Scale	$r = 0.502^*$ $p = 0.000$	1

* Significant correlation at $p < 0.01$ level

Discussion

University students should have scientific, human, and ethical values (Erdem, 2003). In this study, the mean scores of predisposition to ethical values and multidimensional social values were found to be high. Likewise, the total scores of love, justice, and cooperation (subscales of the Predisposition to Ethical Values Scale) as well as family, scientific, work-profession, religious, traditional and political values (subscales of the Multidimensional Social Values Scale) were found to be high. This showed that nursing students attached importance to ethical and social values. Similarly, it was determined that nursing students preferred social values among the individual values, and gave importance to professional values close to the highest level (Hülya, Burçin, Şenyuva, & Nurten, 2012). It was also found that the perception of the social values of the preservice teachers were above the mean (Çalışkan, Yasul, & Ulaş, 2017).

There was a significant positive correlation between predisposition to ethical values and multidimensional social values ($p < 0.01$, $r: 0.502$). Values defined what individuals saw as important, as a source of behaviour (Erdem, 2003). In this context, it was desirable that ethical and social values were a source of nursing students' professional behaviour. It was reported that the importance of ethical and professional values in nursing students was reduced, while the importance of social relationships and personal wellbeing values increased (Jiménez-López, Roales-Nieto, Seco, & Preciado, 2016). It was important that professional, ethical, and professional values were taught effectively in nursing education.

In a study conducted in a clinical setting, it was shown that nurses did not notice serious ethical problems in the psychiatric treatment and care services (Aydin & Ersoy, 2017). Nursing students expressed their professional values, their experiences in health care, personal ethics and moral values, educational experiences, and activities (Rose, Nies, & Reid, 2017). Nursing education was found to be positively associated with professional value scores (Kantek, Kaya, & Gezer, 2017). In this context, it was important for nursing students to take effective professional ethics training during their undergraduate education and to reflect this training in their professional lives.

Conclusion

Nursing students' scores on the total and subscale scores of the Predisposition to Ethical Values and Multidimensional Social Values Scales were found to be high. A moderately positive statistically significant association was observed between the predisposition to ethical values and the multidimensional social values. These results showed that social and ethical values played an important role in the professional decisions and behaviours of nursing students. In this context, the education of ethical and social values in nursing was important. It was recommended that ethics and values were included in nursing curriculum programs.

Ethical Aspects and Conflict of Interest

For conducting this research, official permission was obtained from Düzce University, Non-Invasive Researches Ethics Committee (2017–73) and the Düzce University Health Sciences Faculty Nursing Department. Furthermore, when giving the questionnaire to the students in the study, they were provided information about the purpose and content of the study and their written approval was taken. There are no conflicts of interest.

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