

The impact of nursing interns' affective domain competencies on perceptions of professionalism

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Abstract: The competencies of undergraduate nursing interns in the affective domain influence their perceived dedication, highlighting the connection between these factors. Undergraduate nursing interns' perception of dedication evaluation scale and undergraduate nursing interns' affective domain competence scale were used to survey 198 nursing interns in the Ordos College of Applied Technology nursing program. There was a positive correlation between the nursing interns' affective domain competence score of (100.5 ± 21.71) and the view of dedication score of (126.42 ± 26.44) ($r = 0.699$, $p < 0.01$). Nursing interns were moderately competent in the affective domain and the view of professionalism, and both were closely related. Teachers should emphasize the development of nursing interns' competence in the affective domain, promote students' view of professionalism, and enhance nursing interns' humanistic care in the clinic.

1. Introduction

Dedication is a complex concept, and it has been suggested [1] that it is related to school, social, and family factors. The concept of dedication is an important criterion for evaluating an individual's career development. It is also the value pursuit and standard put forward by the socialist core values on the individual level [2]. It also embodies a philosophical outlook that greatly promotes modern Chinese civilization [3].

In nursing, dedication is the ability of a nurse to treat a patient with care and attention and give them the help they need in a timely and accurate manner, to alleviate their ability to suffer psychologically and physically [4]. Nursing interns can only have excellent dedication and better utilize their talents if they understand the concept of dedication and love the nursing profession. Emotional domain competence is viewed as the basis for success and happiness in life and is essential and important in the daily life and work of care workers [5], thus suggesting that there may be a close relationship between emotional domain competence and perceptions of dedication. At the same time, it was found [6] that affective domain competence is a core competence related to the adaptation of individuals to the environment and social development in complex environments, which is a favorable condition for the development of the individual, the development of society and the development of the country, as well as an important part of the concept of dedication. Emotional domain competencies help nursing interns to increase their sense of identity with the profession and thus to value and respect their profession more, the latter being a central factor in the concept of professionalism [7].

Nursing interns are the reserve of the nursing workforce, and their view of professionalism is crucial to whether nursing will flourish in the future. The purpose of this study was to investigate the current status of nursing interns' affective domain competence and the concept of dedication and to explore the correlation between the two, to provide new ideas and bases for the development of a sense of dedication among students in major schools.

2. Objects and Methods

The study included nursing interns from the Ordos Institute of Applied Technology who were well-informed and voluntarily agreed to participate. It excluded students on academic suspension,

those who had interrupted their studies, and underclassmen due to various factors. Using the Kendall sample estimation method, the cross-sectional sample size was calculated based on measurement data. Considering the factor analysis requirement of 10–20 times the number of entries and accounting for an anticipated 10% data attrition rate, the necessary sample size ranged from 187 to 264 cases. Ultimately, 198 participants were selected for the study.

Demographic variables such as sex, age, political profile, family location, only-child status, school or class cadre role, first-choice volunteer status, and professional development aspirations were examined. The original scale, developed by Gigame et al., was linguistically adapted by the researchers to align with the context of nursing trainees. This adaptation ensured the scale's appropriateness for assessing the affective domain competencies of the participants. The final scale consisted of 25 entries, divided into 4 dimensions, namely, professional connotation comprehension ability (7 entries), professional value internalization ability (7 entries), professional belief perception ability (5 entries), professional value evaluation ability (6 entries), and the scale was scored by Likert's 5-level scoring method, with a total score of 25~125 points, with 1~5 points in the order of "completely incompatible" to "completely compliant". The scale adopts Likert's 5-level scoring method, from "not at all conforming" to "fully conforming" in the order of "1~5 points", with a total score of 25~125 points, and the higher the score, the higher the affective domain competence of nursing interns, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the four dimensions in the study were 0.869~0.039~0.039, which was the same as that in the previous study. Was 0.869~0.952, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the total scale was 0.978.

The scale was developed by Zumin Xu et al.^[10] in 2023 to evaluate nursing interns' perceptions of dedication. The scale consists of 31 entries, including the effect (8 entries), Factor 2 named Learning and Work Attitude (6 entries), Factor 3 named Cultivation of the View of Dedication (7 entries), Factor 4 named Practices of the View of Dedication (8 entries), and Factor 5 named Perceptions of the View of Dedication (2 entries), where Self-Reflection consists of Self-Reflection Inputs and Self-Reflection Needs. Each entry was evaluated for importance using an expert correspondence questionnaire using a Likert 5-point scale, with eight entries reverse scored. The screening criteria were a mean importance score of >3.50, a full score of >50%, and a coefficient of variation of <0.25^[11]. The theory has been widely used in academia^[12-14]; the content validity index is 0.986 and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.717, which has good reliability and validity. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale in this study was 0.947.

The researcher utilized Questionnaire Star to design the questionnaire required for the study and distributed it through WeChat, targeting a group of undergraduate nursing students. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire anonymously and submit their responses^[15-16]. To ensure the efficiency and accuracy of the collected data, three independent researchers were assigned to review all the feedback received. After careful screening, a total of 200 questionnaires were distributed and 198 questionnaires were effectively recovered, representing a recovery rate of 100 percent^[17-18].

The data were statistically analyzed using SPSS 26.0 software. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the general profile of the students and mean and standard deviations were used to describe the scores of the nursing interns' affective domain competencies and views of professionalism. Pearson's correlation analysis was used to explore the correlation between nursing interns' competence in the affective domain and the perception of dedication, with a test level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

3. Results and Discussion

The total score of affective domain competence of nursing interns was (100.5±21.71) and the scores of each dimension are shown in Table 1. The total score for nursing interns' perception of dedication was (126.42 ± 26.44). The scores for each dimension are presented in Table 2. A comparison of the affective domain competencies and perceptions of dedication among students with different characteristics revealed that students with a positive professional outlook scored higher in both the affective domain and dedication perceptions, as shown in Table 3.

Table 1. Affective domain competency scores of nursing trainees (n=198)

dimension (math.)	totals	Entry parity (accountancy)
Perceived competence in professional beliefs	20.25±4.62	4.05±0.92
Comprehension of professional connotations	24.05±5.38	4.01±0.9
Competence in the evaluation of professional values	28.36±6.48	4.05±0.93
Capacity to internalize professional values	27.83±6.23	3.98±0.89
Total Competency Score in the Affective Domain	100.5±21.71	16.09±3.47

Table 2. Nursing interns' perception of dedication scores (n=198)

dimension (math.)	totals	entry parity (accountancy)
Professional values and emotions	31.97±7.58	4±0.95
Learning and working attitude	25.11±5.38	4.19±0.9
Cultivation of the concept of professionalism	29.16±6.19	4.17±0.88
Practice of the concept of dedication	31.96±7.37	4±0.92
Awareness of the concept of dedication	8.22±1.8	4.11±0.9
Total Score for View of Dedication	126.42±26.44	20.45±4.18

Table 3. Comparison of scores on affective domain competence and perception of dedication among nursing interns with different characteristics (n=198)

sports event		quorum	Dedication Score	t	p	Affective Domain Score	t	p
distinguishing between the sexes	man	25	121.96±22.86	-1.019	0.315	99.68±22.66	-0.195	0.847
	women	173	127.06±26.91			100.62±21.63		
political profile	political party	9	129.9±26.75	0.57	0.566	107.78±16.81	0.542	0.583
	the masses	31	119.67±25.73			99.55±21.03		
	participant	158	126.12±26.48			100.27±22.11		
Location of family of origin	City or town	66	129±27.16	0.958	0.34	101.44±23.32	0.415	0.679
	countryside	132	125.13±26.08			100.03±20.93		
Only child or not	not	131	126.19±27.39	-0.175	0.861	100.02±21.21	-0.429	0.669
	yes	67	126.87±24.67			101.45±22.77		
Whether you are a school officer or class officer	not	142	125.35±27.23	-0.956	0.341	100.14±21.63	-0.367	0.715
	yes	56	129.14±24.33			101.41±22.06		
Whether it is the first volunteer	not	71	125.94±27.97	-0.184	0.854	99.93±22.25	-0.273	0.785
	yes	127	126.69±25.65			100.82±21.48		
Professional development prospects	bad	32	125.77±26.57	-3.798	0.001	85.66±24.68	-3.825	0.001
	good	166	129.78±25.9			103.36±19.93		

Nursing interns' affective domain competence total scores and scores on each dimension were positively related to the total scores and scores on the dimensions of the view of dedication, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Correlation analysis of nursing interns' competence in the affective domain and perception of dedication (n=198. r=0.699)

dimension (math.)	correlation coefficient	Professional values and emotions	Learning and working attitude	Cultivation of the concept of professionalism	
Ability to perceive professional beliefs	correlation coefficient	0.070	0.045	0.102	0.101
	P-value	0.325	0.533	0.155	0.155
Comprehension of professional connotations	correlation coefficient	0.080	0.062	0.106	0.102
	P-value	0.262	0.385	0.136	0.151
Competence in the evaluation of professional values	correlation coefficient	0.041	0.028	0.064	0.058
	P-value	0.566	0.699	0.372	0.416
Capacity to internalise professional values	correlation coefficient	0.045	0.031	0.069	0.054
	P-value	0.530	0.668	0.336	0.453

In order to further enhance nursing students' competence in the affective domain, nursing educators should adopt teaching methods that combine theory and practice to enhance students' problem-solving abilities and independent learning ^[19-20]. This helps to stimulate students' interest in learning and makes them more passionate about their profession, thus alleviating patients' suffering and improving the quality of nursing services. In addition, enhancing patients' trust and sense of security in nursing services can help establish a good nurse-patient relationship, promote personal career development, gain a sense of professional accomplishment, and optimize the atmosphere of teamwork to establish a good team image. In summary, it is of vital importance to enhance the affective domain competencies of nursing interns.

To achieve this goal, nursing educators should continue to explore and innovate educational methods. Specific interventions included: implementing regular emotional communication meetings and encouraging interns to share clinical experiences to enhance empathy; conducting role-playing and scenario simulation training to improve interns' ability to deal with complex emotional issues; introducing psychological counseling courses to help interns learn to self-regulate their emotions and cope with stress at work; establishing a mentorship system in which experienced nursing staff mentor interns to teach emotional management skills; and through case studies, enabling interns to understand how to recognize and respond to patients' emotional needs in nursing practice. Through these all-encompassing measures, nursing students' competence in the emotional domain can be effectively enhanced. Establishing positive learning emotions: Freshmen are encouraged to communicate with outstanding senior students, who share their experiences and the joys of nursing studies. This helps freshmen adapt to the university's academic pace while fostering anticipation and enthusiasm for their nursing education. At the sophomore level: Developing empathy is emphasized by organizing field trips to hospitals, allowing students to observe patients' lives and healthcare workers' responsibilities. This immersive experience aims to strengthen students' empathy and understanding of the nursing profession. Students will be able to experience the pain and needs of patients in real-life scenarios and understand the emotions of patients and their families. Enhancement of teamwork emotions: the importance of teamwork is emphasized in laboratory courses and group assignments, such as the practice of basic nursing skills. Students in groups complete the task process, learn to support each other to cooperate, and enhance the sense of collective honor. In the junior year: Deepening responsibility is emphasized through a clinical nursing course where students interact with simulated patients and cases. During this phase, students are required to strictly adhere to nursing procedures and professional standards, further developing their sense of responsibility and clinical competence. Like in a simulated ward, students are asked to independently complete the entire process of patient care, from admission assessment to discharge instructions, to appreciate their

responsibilities. During the senior year: Reinforcing the spirit of dedication is a key focus during the internship phase. Students are encouraged to actively participate in community medical services, volunteer activities, and similar initiatives. For example, they may provide healthcare services to the elderly in local communities, allowing them to experience the fulfillment and joy of selfless service. Enhancement of occupational emotional resilience: In the face of pressure and difficulties in internships, such as patients' misunderstanding and work intensity, students are guided to correctly deal with setbacks and cope with them in a positive frame of mind, so as to consolidate their occupational emotions.

The present study revealed that the total score of nursing interns' perception of dedication was (126.42 ± 26.44), which was moderately high and the student's perception of dedication needs to be further improved. One of the highest scores was (4.19 ± 0.9) for the learning and work attitude entry, and although learning and work attitude scores were the highest they were often not proportional to performance in the clinic, similar to Hairong Luo's study [21]. Nursing students' view of professionalism is key to their professional growth and future career success [22]. Dedication is not only reflected in the love and devotion to nursing work, but also the responsibility for patients, the continuous pursuit of professional knowledge and the continuous improvement of nursing quality, loyalty to the noble qualities of the nursing profession, and strict adherence to the guidelines of professional ethics. Nursing students should have a high sense of responsibility and professionalism, and through participation in clinical practice, participation in teamwork, as well as continuous reflection and self-improvement, they can gradually establish a correct view of dedication and lay a solid foundation for becoming an excellent nursing professional.

This study clearly demonstrates a positive correlation between affective domain competency scores and perceptions of dedication. In the emotional realm, truthfulness, kindness, beauty, and dedication are advocated, and the concept of dedication also requires workers to practice truthfulness, kindness, beauty, and dedication. The results of the study showed that the better the performance of nursing students in the affective domain competence, the higher their scores on the concept of dedication, thus confirming the strong correlation between the affective domain competence and the concept of dedication of nursing students. The nursing profession not only requires practitioners to have solid professional knowledge and skills, but also requires practitioners to invest in deep emotions and show deep humanistic care for patients. Affective domain competencies cover affective attitudes and emotional regulation, including self-regulation, emotional experience, and emotional expression, which help nursing students to understand patients' needs and emotions more deeply, and then provide more humanized nursing services and more adequate spiritual support. A dedicated outlook, on the other hand, emphasizes love of the job, continuous self-improvement and dedication. When nursing students combine affective domain competence with the concept of dedication, they not only enhance their professional skills, but also demonstrate humanistic care, which in turn brings patients a better nursing experience, improves their negative emotions, enhances their therapeutic cooperation, facilitates their recovery process, and improves their quality of life. At the same time, this combination also helps to reduce burnout and improve the efficiency of caregivers. This is of great significance to the sustainable development of nursing and points to a clear direction for the development of nursing education.

4. Conclusion

This study suggests that nursing interns' affective domain competencies and perceptions of professionalism are moderately high, and they are positively correlated. This study provides new ideas for the cultivation of nursing interns' concept of dedication and suggests that nursing educators should pay attention to the cultivation of students' ability in the field of emotion, strengthen the expression of the ability in the field of emotion through self-regulation and emotional experience, promote students' love for the nursing career, and enhance the level of nursing students' dedication to the nursing profession, to enable patients to receive better nursing care services, ensure that the students build a good relationship between healthcare workers and patients, and lay a solid foundation for the vigorous development of the medical career. This lays a solid foundation for the vigorous

development of a medical career.

This study adopted a convenience sampling strategy to focus on the student population of an undergraduate university within Ordos City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. It should be noted that this selection method may result in some degree of deviation in the sample characteristics from the overall population distribution. Therefore, future exploratory research should focus on expanding the sample scope to enhance the credibility of the study's findings. Follow-up studies could increase the sample size and further explore the mechanisms underlying the role of affective domain competence and the concept of dedication. Additionally, using affective domain competence as a foundation, targeted training programs could be developed and applied for further research. In addition, future research could further explore the affective domain competencies and perceptions of the dedication of students from different regions and levels of nursing schools for comparative analysis. At the same time, it combines modern educational technology and innovative training methods to provide stronger support for improving the overall quality of nursing interns and to promote the continuous development of nursing education and medical care.

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