

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL VALUES, STUDENT'S SATISFACTION AND TENDENCY TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine to the relationship between the students' professional values, satisfaction and tendency to leave the school. The research was conducted at a nursing department of a health school with 211 nursing students. The study data were collected with Personal Information Form, the Nursing Professional Values Scale. The professional values score of the nursing students was found to be 3.64 (SS= .859), responsibility score to be 3.62 (SS=.775), prompt score to be 3.59 (SS=.771), human honor score to be 3.68 (SS=.757), autonomy score to be 3.68 (SS=.916) and total scale score to be 3.64 (SS=0.73). Professional values were positively correlated with students' satisfaction, but students' tendency to leave the school was not significant statistically. Consequently, it is determined that the students perceive important to professional values. Increasing of nursing students' perception about professional values ensure to increase their satisfaction.

**Key Words:** Nursing students, professional values, values, student satisfaction, intention to leave school, Turkey.

### INTRODUCTION

Professional values refer to standards adopted by professionals and derived from ethical codes (Orak, 2005, Şişman, 2002) that guide vocational training and practices and influence beliefs and attitudes (Altun, 2003). Fundamental values that a nurse is expected to have are aesthetics, dedication, equality, freedom, dignity, justice and truth (Altun, 2003, Keskin and Yıldırım, 2006, Pang, Senaratana, Kunaviktikul, Klunklin and Mcelmury 2009).

Professional values are one of the factors that shape personal traits of a person (Gianfermi and Buchholz, 2011). They signify and shape behaviors, attitudes and beliefs of people. Moreover, professional values provide internal motivation and improve ethical responsibility and professional devotion (Peer and Schlabach, 2011). Therefore, each professional is at the center of performance and decision-making.

It is of utmost importance to encourage nursing professionals to acquire professional values so as to ensure the development of a professional identity and improve nursing practices (Moon, kim, kim ve lee 2014). Acquisition of professional values is only possible through formal education programs peculiar to professional practices

(Fung-Kam, 1998). Professional values are established through a well-developed curriculum and professional practice (Peer and Schlabach, 2011). Altun (2003) states that professional values of nursing students are elemental to improve their perceptions. Educational programs gradually increase the level of awareness and problem solving skills of nursing students, which will eventually increase their perception of professional values (Altun, 2003). Therefore, professional values adopted by nursing students are a significant output of educational procedures and a substantial indicator of the quality of education (Kaya, 2013, Kaya, Işık, Şenyuva and Kaya 2012).

Student satisfaction is another common indicator of the quality of education today. Student satisfaction refers to the degree to which student needs and expectations concerning educational programs and environmental factors are responded (Lieglar, 1997, Elliott and Shin, 2002). Satisfaction evaluation is typically based on a cognitive process in which individuals compare their prior expectations of outcomes with perceived performance (Elliott and Shin, 2002; Elliott and Healy, 2001). Studies have shown student satisfaction to have a positive impact on student motivation, student retention, recruiting efforts and fundraising (Baykal, Sökmen, Kormaz ve Akgün 2005, Petruzzellis, D'Uggento ve Romanazzi, 2006, Elliot and Shine, 2002).

Intention to leave school is usually defined as an intention to drop out from university (Duque, 2014). An analysis of intention to leave school provides significant data for the interventions to reduce the drop out rates (Taylı, 2008) The study results in literature suggest that intention to leave school results from poor adaptation to academic and social environment of the school (Duque, 2014). One of the principal reasons of intention to leave is considered to be low student satisfaction. Besides, results of relevant studies similarly demonstrate that low student satisfaction increases intention to leave school (Şimşek, 2011, Duque, 2014).

Professional values of students, student satisfaction, and intention to leave school have been already analyzed in several studies (Espeland and Indrehus, 2003, Thorpe and Loo, 2003, Orak 2005, Norman, Buerhaus, Donelan, Closkey and Dittus 2005, Rassin, 2010, Kaya et. al., 2012, Kaya, 2013). On the other hand, the correlation between these different phenomena, particularly the relation between professional values and student satisfaction and intention to leave school, has remained unclear. This study, therefore, particularly focuses on the correlation between professional values and student satisfaction and intention to leave school. The study results are considered to provide vital data to improve the quality of nursing curriculum.

## **METHOD**

### **Study**

This study was designed as a descriptive study in order to investigate the correlation between professional values, student satisfaction, and intention to leave school.

### **Study Universe and Sample**

The study universe consists of student nurses (327 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year students) in a Nursing School in west Turkey. As all students in the study universe were included in the study, no sampling method was used in the study. The study data were obtained from 211 nursing students who were regularly attending school and consented to participate in the study. The mean age was 20.6 and 28.0% of the participants were 1st year students, 28.4% of the participants were 2nd year students, 28.0% of the participants were 3rd year students, 15.6% of the participants were 4th year students. It was further noted that 77.3% of the participants were female.

### **Data Collection Tools**

The study data were collected with a Personal Information Form and Nursing Professional Value Scale-NPVS.

### **Personal Information Form**

Personal Information Form was developed by researchers in line with the current literature and it consists of 5 items. The form contains information about age, gender, grade, satisfaction from being a student, and intention to leave school within the last year.

### Nursing Professional Value Scale-NPVS

Nursing Professional Value Scale-NPVS was developed by Weis and Mary Jane Schank (2000) on the basis of the ethical codes of ANA. The scale was translated into Turkish by Orak in 2005 and its validity and reliability were tested. The scale is composed of five dimensions, dignity (11 items), responsibility (9 items), taking action (8 items), safety (4 items) and autonomy (4 items) and 36 items in total.

The total score of the scale was the sum of the scores of 36 items. The subdimension scores were calculated with the sum of each dimension; dignity (items 17-18- 19-28-29-31-32-33-34-35-36), responsibility (items 6-7-8-9-10-11-13-14-16), taking action (items 4-12-15-20-21-22-27-30), safety (items 1-2-3-5.), and autonomy (items 23-24-25-26) (Orak 2005).

The items were scaled with a 5 point likert scale as not important (1), slightly important (2), important (3), very important (4), and considerably important (5). The total score and subdimension scores were evaluated with arithmetic mean. Higher mean score indicate that nursing students place a stronger emphasis on professional values.

Orak (2005) analyzed the internal consistency and found that Cronbach Alpha coefficient was .97 (Orak 2005). The scale had been previously used by Kaya (2013) in a study titled "An Analysis of the Perception of Professional Values and the Job Satisfaction of Nursing Managers in Antalya" who found that total alpha coefficient was .91. The results of our study suggested that internal consistency coefficient was .97 for total internal consistency, .92 for dignity, .91 for responsibility, .89 for taking action, .82 for safety, and .88 for autonomy.

### Collecting Data

The study data were collected between April-May 2013 after a permission in writing was granted by the school management. The nursing students were informed about the purpose and the confidentiality before handing out data forms. Those who consented to participate in the study and attended the class that day were delivered data forms and they were collected back after 30 minutes. The study data obtained from 211 participants were eventually analyzed.

### Data Analysis

The study data were analyzed with SPSS 20.0 software and data reliability and validity were evaluated with Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. The demographic characteristics of participant students were analyzed with frequency, percentage, and arithmetic mean. Variance analysis (ANOVA) was carried out to evaluate whether or not the perception of professional values varied according to intention to leave school. The correlation between the perception of professional values and student satisfaction was analyzed with Pearson Correlation Analysis. Level of significance was taken as 0.05.

## FINDINGS

Table 1: Distribution of Intention to Leave School and Satisfaction of Nursing students

Satisfaction	n	%
Satisfied	113	53.5
Partly	83	39.3
Dissatisfied	15	7.1
Intention to Leave School	n	%
Yes	12	5.7
No	158	74.9
Not Sure	41	19.4

The satisfaction levels of nursing students was analyzed (Table 1) and it was found that 53,5% of the students were satisfied and 39,3% of them were partly satisfied olduğu while 7,1% of the participants were dissatisfied. Their intention to leave school was also analyzed and it was noted that 5.7% of the students had an intention to leave school while 74.9% of them didn't express any such intention and 19.4% of the students said they weren't sure.

Table 2: NPVS Scores of Nursing Students (N=211)

NPVS	M	SS	Min.	Max
Safety	3.64	.859	1.75	5.00
Responsibility	3.62	.775	1.44	5.00
Taking Action	3.59	.771	1.75	5.00
Dignity	3.68	.757	1.82	5.00
Autonomy	3.68	.916	1.25	5.00
Total Score	3.64	.733	1.86	5.00

The mean scores of the scale were found 3.64 (SS= .859) for safety dimension, 3.62 (SS=.775) for responsibility dimension, 3.59 (SS=.771) for taking action dimension, 3.68 (SS=.757) for dignity dimension, 3.68 (SS=.916) for autonomy dimension and 3.64 (SS=0.73 ) for total score (Table 2).

Table 3: The Correlation between Student Satisfaction and the Perception of Professional Values of Nursing Students

NPVS	Student Satisfaction	
	r	p
Safety	.138*	.046
Responsibility	.130	.060
Taking Action	.200*	.003
Dignity	.157*	.023
Autonomy	.138*	.045
Total Score	.168*	.015

\*p<0.05

The Correlation between Student Satisfaction and the Perception of Professional Values of Nursing Students was analyzed in Table 3. It was concluded that there was a positive weak correlation between Student Satisfaction and the Perception of Professional Values of Nursing Students (r=0.168, p=0.015) .

Table 4: The Correlation between the Perception of Professional Values and Intention to Leave School

NPSV	Intention to Leave School						F	p
	Yes (n=12)		No (n=158)		Not Sure (n=41)			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Safety	3.52	1.041	3.69	.859	3.48	.795	1.183	.308
Responsibility	3.50	1.131	3.68	.770	3.44	.651	1.694	.186
Taking Action	3.40	1.097	3.66	.773	3.38	.608	2.584	.078
Dignity	3.50	.894	3.73	.777	3.53	.614	1.461	.234
Autonomy	3.41	.943	3.71	.916	3.62	.917	.665	.515
Total Score	3.47	.984	3.69	.747	3.48	.560	1.766	.173

The study data were analyzed to evaluate whether or not the perception of professional values varied according to intention to leave school (Table 4). The results of ANOVA analysis demonstrated that the perception of professional values didn't vary according to intention to leave school.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Discussion

Professional values bear a crucial significance in professional qualification. Schooling has a vital function in developing professional values among students (Moon et. al., 2014) during which acquisition of professional knowledge and skills are deeply influenced by the school environment, teacher qualifications, curriculum, the value of students within educational practices, and attitudes of teachers. The schooling experiences of students will certainly affect their perceptions of the quality of education and their intention to leave school. Those who believe that their expectations are met continue their education while those who don't are disappointed and they consequently consider leaving school (Şimşek, 2011, Kantek, 2011). Today, higher education centers are expected to encourage Professional values among students, ensure higher students satisfaction, and create low levels of intention to leave school. This study, therefore, deliberately focuses on Professional values of students, student satisfaction, and their intention to leave school.

One of the striking findings of the study is that there is a positive correlation between professional values and student satisfaction ( $r=0.168$ ,  $p=0.015$ ). Although there aren't any studies who particularly indicate such a correlation, a literature review will bring forth studies on the correlation between professional values of nurses and job satisfaction. For instance, Prothero, Marshall and Fosbinder (1999) stated that job satisfaction of nurses and Professional values were certainly correlated (Prothero, Marshall ve Fosbinder, 1999). De-Cooman et. al. (2008), on the other hand, pointed out a positive significant correlation between professional values and job satisfaction (De-Cooman et. al. 2008). Given the fact that professional values eventually shape the attitudes, ideas, and perspectives of professionals, it can be reasonably expected that Professional values would also affect job satisfaction (Moon et. al., 2014, Peer and Schlabach, 2011). Thus, the correlation between professional values and job satisfaction that was confirmed with the results of this study can't be considered as a contingency.

It was also analyzed whether or not the mean scores of NPSV differed in accordance with the mean scores of Intention to Leave School. The results of ANOVA analysis showed that the mean scores of NPSV didn't suggest any difference according to intention to leave. However, student satisfaction is commonly regarded as the leading factor that is most influential on their intention to leave school (Şimşek, 2011, Duque, 2014, Kantek, 2011). Therefore, it is often concluded that factors that may affect student satisfaction may also affect intention to leave school, which didn't comply with the findings of our study which could be related to weak perception of professional values of the participants.

This study has also certain limitations one of which is that student satisfaction and Intention to Leave School were evaluated with bipolar scales. Therefore, findings obtained from such scales can only express general attitudes and perceptions of students. It is certainly suggested to conduct further studies that will present a more detailed analysis. Relatively poor study data on the correlation between professional values, student satisfaction and intention to leave school can be considered as another limitation of the study. Additionally, that the study was conducted in only one school and it included students from different classes was a particular challenge to generalize the study results to a wider population. Further studies are suggested to be repeated with larger sample groups.

### Conclusion

It was concluded that this study provided substantial data on the correlation between professional values and student satisfaction and intention to leave school. Enhancing the professional values of nursing students will result in elevated student satisfaction. Finally, it was also reported that the perception of professional values didn't have a far reaching influence of their intention to leave school.

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