



EXPLORING PROFESSIONALISM: CHARACTERISTICS AND SELF-CONCEPT OF IMPLEMENTING NURSES

Arlina Dhian Sulistyowati^{*}, Istianna Nurhidayati¹, Setianingsih Setianingsih², Puput Risti Kusumaningrum³

Faculty of Health and Technology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Klaten, Indonesia

Original Research

ABSTRACT

Introduction: To enhance the delivery and quality of nursing care, which in turn affects nurse satisfaction, a professional self-concept among nurses is required. Various factors, including the nature of nursing, impact this self-concept. In this study, the professional self-concept of implementing nurses at Pandan Arang Hospital in Boyolali was compared with several nurse characteristics. **Methods:** The research methodology employed a cross-sectional descriptive correlational design. Seventy-two nurses in inpatient wards served as the research sample, selected using a total sampling approach. The questionnaire on nurses' professional self-concept was taken from Angel, Craven, and Denson, which was adopted by Juanamasta, covering four aspects: care, knowledge, staff relations, and leadership. As part of the data-gathering method, a questionnaire was utilized. **Results:** According to the research findings, among the nurses at Pandan Arang Boyolali Hospital, the majority (51.1%) had a positive professional self-concept. Furthermore, there was no significant relationship between age, gender, employment status, or length of work and nurses' professional self-concept, as indicated by a p -value > 0.05 . However, a significant relationship was found between marital status and nurses' professional self-concept, as indicated by a p -value < 0.05 . **Conclusions:** The results of this study suggest that age, gender, employment status, and length of employment are not significantly related to nurses' professional self-concept. However, a significant relationship was observed between marital status and nurses' professional self-concept.

INTRODUCTION

A nurse must be able to uphold the ethics and values of nursing, as they are regarded as the identity of nursing in providing services. These principles are reflected in patient welfare services and serve as the basis for nursing practice; thus, nurses must behave professionally. The values of nursing professionalism are the foundation for nurses when providing nursing activities and services to patients (Nursalam, 2015).

In Trijono's research at Bekasi Regional General Hospital, many nurses were found to be working unprofessionally. This has led to service actions that do not meet standards, posing a risk of malpractice and potentially harming patients. This has triggered the societal stigma that nurses lack good competence and professionalism in their work. Poor nursing service activities can result in errors in healthcare delivery. Such errors have the potential to cause harm to patients (Trijono, 2016). Safety is fundamental in healthcare delivery and is also a sensitive factor in quality management. One of the systems in hospitals that needs to serve as the basis for providing service is patient safety. This system is established to make patients feel safer and to prevent injuries due to negligence (Sinaga, 2017).

It is the responsibility of nurses and other professionals to meet the demands of quality healthcare services in fulfilling the expectations of patients as recipients of healthcare services. Nurses constitute the largest proportion of healthcare workers in hospitals. They interact directly with patients while providing services. Therefore, they directly influence productivity and the quality of care as well as patient satisfaction (Aminah, 2021). Nurses need to improve their self-concept as well as develop inner strength to improve their perspective. Failure to take responsibility for their role or neglecting to pay attention to and improve their performance in providing nursing care services will result in a continued negative self-concept in individual nurses (Laschinger, H. K. S et al., 2001).

The issue of nursing professionalism remains a significant concern in healthcare services, as nurses must uphold ethical values and maintain professional conduct to ensure patient safety and high-quality care. Research by Trijono (2016) at Bekasi Regional General Hospital found that a considerable number of nurses exhibited unprofessional behavior, leading to substandard service, malpractice risks, and potential patient harm. This has

ARTICLE INFO

Received January 23, 2025
Accepted April 22, 2025
Online October 30, 2025

*Correspondence:
Arlina Dhian Sulistyowati

E-mail :
arlinadhian@gmail.com

Keywords:
Characteristic of Nurses, Professional
Self-Concept



contributed to the societal stigma that nurses lack competence and professionalism. Studies indicate that approximately 40% of nurses have been reported to perform below professional standards, resulting in errors in healthcare delivery (Sinaga, 2017). Furthermore, over 60% of hospital errors are attributed to nursing actions, highlighting the critical role of professionalism in patient safety (Aminah, 2021). Nurses, constituting the largest proportion of healthcare workers, directly influence productivity, care quality, and patient satisfaction. However, self-concept issues among nurses can further impact their professional identity and performance.

A preliminary study conducted on January 7, 2022, at RSUD Pandan Arang Boyolali through interviews with five implementing nurses revealed that all had experienced negative stereotypes, such as being perceived as strict, harsh, and unfriendly. Despite this, they expressed pride in their profession and emphasized the importance of self-confidence, optimism, precision, and planning in their daily tasks. The preliminary study conducted by the author on the same date involved interviews with five implementing nurses who were graduates of a Diploma III in Nursing. The results showed that all five nurses had experienced negative stigma or stereotypes, such as being perceived as strict, harsh, and unfriendly. However, the nurses expressed pride in themselves and took pride in being recognized as nurses by many people. None of them reported feeling fear, lack of confidence, or shyness. They shared their opinions on how to build a professional self-concept, emphasizing the importance of fostering self-confidence, always being optimistic, working meticulously, and having a plan for their tasks in the ward or workplace. The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between nurse characteristics and the professional self-concept of implementing nurses at RSUD Pandan Arang Boyolali.

To address the challenges in nursing professionalism, several solutions can be implemented. First, continuous professional education and training programs should be strengthened to enhance nurses' ethical awareness and adherence to nursing values, ensuring high-quality service delivery. Second, hospitals must establish a supportive work environment that fosters professionalism through structured mentorship, regular performance evaluations, and clear guidelines for ethical practice. Third, implementing a robust patient safety system is essential to minimize risks, prevent malpractice, and improve the quality of care.

Additionally, fostering a positive self-concept among nurses is crucial, as it influences their confidence, motivation, and overall performance. This can be achieved through self-reflection practices, peer support, and leadership development programs that empower nurses to take responsibility for their roles. Lastly, public awareness campaigns should be conducted to address societal stigmas, promoting a more accurate understanding of the nursing profession and reinforcing its vital role in healthcare. By integrating these strategies, hospitals can improve nurses' professionalism, enhance patient satisfaction, and ensure safer healthcare services.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design employed was a descriptive correlational study with a cross-sectional approach. The population in this study consisted of 72 nurses in the inpatient wards at Pandan Arang Regional General Hospital, Boyolali. The sampling technique used was total sampling, with inclusion criteria specifying nurses working in inpatient wards and holding at least a Diploma III in Nursing. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included nurses who were sick or on leave.

The questionnaire on nurses' professional self-concept was taken from Angel (2012) and adopted by Juanamasta (2018), covering four aspects: care, knowledge, staff relations, and leadership. The data processing began with editing, coding, data entry, and rechecking the completed questionnaires, followed by data analysis. The validity test was conducted, and since the calculated *r*-count value was greater than or equal to the *r*-table value (0.093), the statements were considered valid. The reliability test results showed that the Cronbach's alpha values obtained from each questionnaire ranged between 0.742 and 0.960, indicating that the questionnaire was reliable.

Data collection was conducted in July 2022, as evidenced by the ethical approval code issued by Pandan Arang Hospital, Boyolali (No. 070/4175/4.21/2022). The research utilized a questionnaire on self-concept, encompassing four research aspects—knowledge, leadership, staff relations, and care—consisting of 20 statements. The bivariate analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between age, gender, marital status, employment status, and length of employment with professional self-concept. This analysis used Kendall's Tau correlation test.

RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Age, Gender, Marital Status, Employment Status, Length of Employment, and Professional Self-Concept of Nurses at Pandan Arang Boyolali Regional General Hospital, January 2022.

Age	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Young Adult (18-40 years old)	32	44.4
Middle Adult (41-60 years old)	40	55.6
Gender	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Male	14	19.4
Female	58	80.6

Marital status	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Married	63	87.5
Unmarried	9	12.5
Employment status	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Civil Servant	34	47.2
Regional Public Service Agency (Non-Civil Servant)	38	52.8
Length of Employment	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
≤ 5 years	16	22.2
>5 years	56	77.8
Professional Self-Concept	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Poor	34	47.2
Good	38	52.8
Total	72	100

Table 1 above shows that the majority of nurses' ages at Pandan Arang Boyolali Regional General Hospital fall into the middle-adulthood category (55.6%). Most were female (80.6%), married (87.5%), had non-civil servant employment status (52.8%) and had more than five years of work experience (77.8%). The majority of nurses at this hospital possessed a good professional self-concept (52.8%).

Table 2. Analysis of the relationship between age, gender, marital status, employment status, and length of employment with professional self-concept of nurses at Pandan Arang Boyolali Regional General Hospital, January 2022.

Variable	Category	Professional Self-Concept							
		Poor		Good		Total		R	p-value
		F	%	F	%	F	%		
Age	Young Adult (18-40 years old)	13	18.1	19	26.4	32	44.5	0.052	0.608
	Middle Adult (41-60 years old)	21	29.1	19	26.4	40	55.5		
Gender	Male	9	12.5	5	6.9	14	19.4	-0.18.	0.071
	Female	25	34.7	33	45.9	58	80.6		
Marital Status	Married	28	38.9	35	48.6	63	87.5	0.274	0.026
	Unmarried	6	8.3	3	4.2	9	12.5		
Employment status	Civil servant	16	22.2	18	25.0	34	47.2	0.082	0.418
	Regional public service agency (Non-Civil Servant)	18	25.0	20	27.8	38	52.8		
Working perioed	≤5 years	6	8.3	10	13.9	16	22.2	0.025	0.801
	>5 years	28	38.9	28	38.9	56	77.8		

In Table 2, the Kendall's Tau coefficient between age, gender, employment status, length of employment, and professional self-concept was > 0.05 . This indicates that there is no significant relationship or between these factors with nurses' professional self-concept. However, the Kendall's Tau coefficient for marital status and professional self-concept was 0.274, with a significance of $0.026 < 0.05$. This implies a significant relationship or correlation between marital status and nurses' professional self-concept.

DISCUSSION

According to the research findings, the majority of nurses at Pandan Arang Boyolali Regional General Hospital had a good professional self-concept (52.8%). Self-concept encompasses all thoughts, beliefs, and individual convictions that enable individuals to know themselves and influence their relationships with others. An individual's self-concept is formed from their unique experiences within themselves, with their closest people, and with the realities of the world. Professional self-

concept is an understanding that nurses hold about themselves in the work environment. A nurse's self-concept is a reflection of the information and beliefs they hold about the roles, values, and behaviors that enhance their professional identity (Goliroshan, S et al., 2021). Professional self-concept positively impacts a nurse's abilities. A good professional self-concept is evident in the implementation of efficient nursing services and harmonious collaboration with other

healthcare professionals. Professional self-concept develops from attitudes and journeys in promoting professional identity. Nurses develop this concept as they progress from nursing students to professional nurses by expressing their professional identity and self-image (Juanamasta, 2018). Professional self-concept can be shaped by delivering high-quality services to patients through an efficiency process, ultimately affecting their satisfaction (Lee & Yang, 2015).

The analysis revealed a Kendall's Tau coefficient of 0.052 and a significance value of $0.608 > 0.05$ for the relationship between age and professional self-concept, suggesting no significant relationship or correlation between the two variables. These research findings are consistent with those of Yessy and Nabhani (2019), stating that age is not significantly associated with nurse performance. This is because, as someone grows older, their abilities tend to increase or mature. The current research aligns with previous studies that consider age a non-significant variable influencing nurse performance. Furthermore, Keliat's theory supports these findings, suggesting that an individual's self-concept is not formed in line with the level of growth and development of the individual; rather, it is learned through social contact and experiences in interacting with others. An individual's perception of themselves is influenced by how they interpret others' perceptions of themselves. A nurse's age, in general, serves as a marker of maturity in decision-making actions, which are guided by each individual's experiences (Purnawati, 2018).

Self-concept can be influenced by several factors, including levels of development and maturity, culture, external and internal sources, success and failure experiences, stressors, age and trauma, education, occupation, and marital status (Tarwoto & Wartonah, 2015). Contrary to this factor, however, this research indicates that gender, age, employment status, and length of employment are not related to nurses' self-concept. According to Keliat's theory, self-concept is not inherently tied to an individual's level of growth and development; instead, it is acquired through social contact and experiences in interacting with others. How individuals perceive themselves is affected by how they interpret others' perceptions of them. In reality, as individuals gain more work experience, they tend to enhance their professionalism, as experience serves as a valuable teacher. Additionally, work experience provides useful information to improve work quality (Notoatmodjo, 2012). One's occupation significantly influences the process of accessing necessary information for a certain object. Length of employment and productivity indicate a positive relationship, implying that the longer someone works, the more skilled and experienced they become (Robbins & Judge, 2013). However, the current study found that work experience length does not appear to affect nurses' self-concept. This may be attributed to external factors such as resources available in the work environment or organization, including funding and work support networks, which are perceived similarly by nurses.

actors related to marital status can influence a nurse's professional self-concept, such as the drive to be responsible for the family's welfare or for the happiness of their spouse and children. A married nurse will strive to meet the needs of their family and therefore work to the best of their abilities (Tarwoto & Wartonah, 2015). Married individuals generally experience a higher level of well-being because they tend to receive more social support. Marriage is linked to a longer life, making individuals healthier and happier. Both men and women benefit from marriage. Maintaining a balance between work and personal life has a positive impact on a nurse's self-concept (Dehghan Nayeri et al., 2006). A nurse's professional self-concept can enhance patients' health status through appropriate interventions. The characteristics of a nurse are part of the factors influencing self-concept (Nam & Park, 2002).

The findings of this study highlight the importance of professional self-concept in shaping a nurse's performance and overall effectiveness in patient care. Although more than half of the nurses at Pandan Arang Boyolali Regional General Hospital demonstrated a good professional self-concept, it is crucial to explore the underlying factors that influence this concept. Self-concept is not solely developed through age or length of experience but is also shaped by an individual's environment, interactions, and perceptions of their role within the healthcare system. While some theories suggest that experience enhances professionalism, this study indicates that external factors such as workplace support, institutional policies, and access to professional development opportunities may have a more significant impact than tenure alone. Additionally, the role of personal factors like motivation, confidence, and social support must be considered in understanding why some nurses develop a strong professional identity while others do not.

Another crucial aspect to consider is the role of marital status in shaping self-concept. Married nurses often experience greater motivation due to their sense of responsibility toward their families, which may drive them to perform better professionally. The balance between personal and professional life plays a crucial role in shaping self-perception, as positive personal relationships can enhance confidence and job satisfaction. However, self-concept is also influenced by societal expectations and stereotypes, which may affect how nurses perceive themselves and their role in the healthcare system. A strong professional self-concept enables nurses to provide high-quality patient care and contributes to better patient outcomes. Therefore, fostering a positive work environment, providing continuous professional development, and addressing societal stigmas surrounding nursing professionalism are essential in strengthening nurses' self-concept and improving overall healthcare services.

CONCLUSIONS

The study found no significant relationship between age, gender, employment status, or length of

employment and professional self-concept. However, marital status was significantly associated with professional self-concept. These findings highlight the importance of personal and social factors in shaping nurses' self-concept. Additionally, this research can serve as a reference for further studies, contributing to the development of knowledge in the field of nursing professionalism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors greatly appreciate the collaboration and support of the administration and staff of Pandan Arang Boyolali Regional General Hospital during the data collection process. We also express our sincere gratitude to the participating nurses, whose involvement and valuable contributions made this study possible.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Arlina Dhian Sulistyowati contributed to the study's conception and design, data analysis, and manuscript drafting. Istianna Nurhidayati was involved in the preliminary literature review and data collection. Setianingsih was responsible for data validation and interpretation of the results. Puput Risti Kusumaningrum assisted with formatting, manuscript revision, and final editing. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this study.

FUNDING

This study did not receive any specific grant from public, private, or non-profit organizations.

REFERENCES

- Aminah, Aminah., & Lili Amaliah. (2021). Hubungan Manajemen Controlling Kepala Ruangan Terhadap Motivasi Perawat Dalam Pelaksanaan Pendokumentasian Asuhan Keperawatan Di Ruang Rawat Inap Rsud Dr. Drajat Prawiranegara Serang. *Jurnal Ilmiah Keperawatan*, 2 (2), 29-33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.62870/jik.v2i2.17715>
- Angel, E. , R. C. N. D. (2012). The Nurses Self-Concept Instrument (NSCI): Assesment of psychometric properties for Ausralian domestic and international student nurses. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 49(7). 880-886. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2012.01.016>
- Dehghan Nayeri, N., Nazari, A. a., Selsali, M., & Ahmadi, F. (2006). Viewpoints of Nurses about Productivity and the Effects of Current Evaluation Process on it. *Scientific Magazine Yafte*, 7(4), 91–100.
- Goliroshan, S., Nobahar, M., Raeisdana, N., & Ebadinejad, Z. (2021). Peran protektif konsep diri profesional dan keterikatan pekerjaan pada burnout perawat : pemodelan persamaan struktural. *Keperawatan BMC*, 20(203). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-021-00727-8>
- Juanamasta, I. G. (2018). Pemodelan Konsep Diri Profesional Perawat Terhadap Produktifitas Kerja Perawat Pelaksana Di Ruang Rawat Inap. Pemodelan Konsep Diri Profesional Perawat Terhadap Produktifitas Kerja Perawat Pelaksana Di Ruang Rawat Inap. Retrieved November 21, 2021, from <https://repository.unair.ac.id/77695/>
- Laschinger, H. K. S., Shamian, J., & Thomson, D. (2001). Impact of magnet hospital characteristics on nurses' perceptions of trust, burnout, quality of care, and work satisfaction. *Nursing Economics*, 19(5), 209-219.
- Lee, H. K., & Yang, H. J. (2015). Lee, H.K. and Yang, H.J., 2015. Influence of Professional Self-Concept and Professional Autonomy on Nursing Performance of Clinic Nurses. *International Journal of Bio-Science and Bio-Technology*, 7(5), 297-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14257/ijbsbt.2015.7.5.27>
- Nam, K.-H., & Park, J.-H. (2002). A study on the relationship of empowerment with job satisfaction and organizational commitment perceived by nurses. *Journal of Korean Academy of Nursing Administration*, 8(1), 137–150.
- Notoatmodjo, S. (2012). Pengantar ilmu pedidikan dan ilmu perilaku kesehatan. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Nursalam. (2015). Manajemen Keperawatan Aplikasi dalam Praktik Keperawatan Profesional. Jakarta: Salemba Medika.
- Purnawati, T. (2018). Public Funding and Corporate Innovation. Hub Antara Karakteristik Perawat, Gaya Kepemimp Dan Fasilitas Dengan Dokumentasi Asuhan Keperawatan Di Ruang Rawat Ina RSUD Ajibarang. Retrieved Februari 21, 2022, from <http://repository.ump.ac.id/id/eprint/8389>
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2013). Organizational Behavior (15th ed.). Inggris: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Sinaga, W. (2017). Issu Terkait Keselamatan Pasien. *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Universitas Diponegoro (JKM)*, 6(2).
- Tarwoto, & Wartonah. (2015). Kebutuhan Dasar Manusia dan Proses Keperawatan. Jakarta: Salemba Medika.
- Trijono, Rachmat., & Tien Partinah. (2017). Hubungan Profesionalisme Perawat Dengan resiko Terjadinya Malpraktikdi RSUD Bekasi Tahun 20216. *JURNAL AFIAT Kesehatan dan Anak*. 3(2), <https://doi.org/10.34005/afiat.v3i2.684>
- Yessy, O. K., & Nabhani, W. (2019). Hubungan Karakteristik Perawat Dengan Kinerja Perawat RS PKU Muhammadiyah Delanggu. Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://repository.itspku.ac.id/165/1/2016012006.pdf>