**Experiences of Learner Nurses, Nurse Educationalists and Professional Nurses Regarding Professionalism in an Undergraduate Nursing Programme**

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**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The current health care environment is requiring professional nurses to be capable of managing complex professional issues. It becomes increasingly challenging for the nursing profession to maintain its professional status and to deliver the quality of service expected in a society characterised by diversity. Core professional values, viewed as synonymous with professionalism, provide a shared foundation that gives meaning to the professional practice of nursing and unites students and nurses in a collective culture. There is awareness among nurse educators, clinical facilitators, professional nurses and learner nurses of the need for strong professional values that is vital in the preparation of nurses to manage patient care in a capable and professional manner.

**OBJECTIVES**

**Phase 1:**
- To explore and describe the experiences of learner nurses on professionalism during their undergraduate nursing programme at a Higher Education Institution in the Western Cape.
- To explore and describe how nurse educationalists and professional nurses could facilitate professionalism of undergraduate learner nurses in nursing practice in the Western Cape.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

Qualitative, Exploratory, Descriptive, Contextual research design with a case study approach

**DATA COLLECTION**

**Phase 1:** Experiences of learner nurses, nurse educationalists and professional nurses

**LEARNER NURSES**

- **THEME 1:** First and second year participants experience role-modelling of non-professional behaviour of specific nurse practitioners in specific settings
- **THEME 2:** First and second year participants’ perceptions and experiences of language barriers to development of professional behaviour
- **THEME 3:** Practitioners projected towards HL Students
- **THEME 4:** Participants’ understanding/perception of professional behaviour
- **THEME 5:** Participants experience of students professional/unprofessional behaviour as contributing to the image of UWC/identity of voices from first and second year, more voices from seniors
- **THEME 6:** Reasons for students and practitioners unprofessional behaviour and implications and suggestions for improvement

**NURSE EDUCATIONALISTS**

- **THEME 1:** PN perceptions/experiences of non-professional behaviour of UWC students
- **THEME 2:** Expectations and experiences of realising of expectations of professional behaviour in practice
- **THEME 3:** Professional nurses’ roles in enhancing/strengthening students’ professional behaviour
- **THEME 4:** Obstacles in mentoring and monitoring students professional behaviour
- **THEME 5:** Suggestions to support/encourage students professional behaviour

**PROFESSIONAL NURSES**

- **THEME 1:** PN perceptions/experiences of non-professional behaviour of UWC students
- **THEME 2:** Expectations and experiences of realising of expectations of professional behaviour in practice
- **THEME 3:** Professional nurses’ roles in enhancing/strengthening students’ professional behaviour
- **THEME 4:** Obstacles in mentoring and monitoring students professional behaviour
- **THEME 5:** Suggestions to support/encourage students professional behaviour

**PURPOSE**

To develop a framework for nurse educationalists and professional nurses to facilitate professionalism amongst undergraduate learner nurses for nursing practice in the Western Cape.

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Permission from ethical committees
Informed, written consent
Privacy and confidentiality

**CONCLUSION:** From the findings it was evident that there are different understandings and perceptions of generations of nurses coming to the realisation of the concept of professionalism.

**REFERENCES:**
