



The Relationship Between Proactive Personality Traits and Professional Values in Final-Year Nursing Students

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Abstract

Aim: This descriptive, relational study investigated the relationship between final-year nursing students' proactive personality traits and professional values.

Method: The research population consisted of 101 final-year nursing students in the nursing department of a university in eastern Turkey between 10-20 December 2022. The study data were collected online using the participant introduction form, the Abbreviated Proactive Personality Scale and the Professional Nursing Values Scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent groups t-test, Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson correlation test.

Results: The final-year nursing students were found to have an average of 49.53 ± 10.34 and 112.34 ± 15.87 on the Abbreviated Proactive Personality Scale and Professional Nursing Values Scale, respectively, and had a proactive personality and high professional values above the medium level. The study showed that the final-year nursing students who volunteered to become nurses had higher mean scores on the Professional Nursing Values Scale total score and the Professionalism, Activism and Justice subscales, with a statistically significant difference. A moderately significant positive correlation was found between students' Abbreviated Proactive Personality Scale and Professional Nursing Values Scale mean scores ($r=0.477$, $p<0.001$). The research found that as students' proactive personality increased, so did their professional values.

Conclusion: The study found that students had proactive personalities and high professional values above the moderate level, and as proactive personality traits increased, their professional values also increased. In this regard, developing students' proactive personality traits and professional nursing values may be recommended, as increasing their awareness and conducting research with larger groups.

Keywords: Final year nursing students, Proactive personality, Nursing, Professional nursing values

1. Introduction

Proactive personality is the inclination to take personal actions to influence one's environment (1). Individuals with a stronger proactive personality are more emotionally stable, better equipped to cope with stress and seek opportunities to improve their performance (1,3). Several studies have shown that proactive personality positively impacts various career variables, including career decision-making processes (4) and career adaptability (5) in university students. Proactive personality is positively associated with learning motivation (6) and academic self-efficacy (7). Individuals with proactive personalities are aware of their responsibilities and strive to create positive changes in all environments. These characteristics enable them to achieve their goals more efficiently and persist in their efforts (8,9). Proactive personality behaviours play a crucial role in various professions, including nursing.

Nursing aims to solve existing health problems and improve quality of life. Nurses can offer high-quality care by respecting their patients' lives, individuality, integrity, values, decisions, and honour. Nurses must know the personal and professional values that shape their behaviour (10,11). Professional values are the standards of action accepted by practitioners and the professional group, providing a framework for evaluating beliefs and attitudes that affect behaviour (12). The acquisition of nursing professional values is central to professional development. Professional behaviours expand the roles and responsibilities of nurses, enabling positive changes in the people they care for and increasing the quality of care (13,14).

Nursing students must integrate their values and characteristics with their professional values while adapting to their professional roles throughout their education. A study conducted with final-year nursing students found that those with high proactive personality traits had better communication skills and used various approaches to solve conflicts (15). Nursing students must possess a proactive personality to manage their knowledge and skills rationally. The literature reveals limited studies examining proactivity in nurses and student nurses (15,18). However, studies have not explored the relationship between proactive personality traits and professional values in final-year nursing students. Examining and developing nursing students' proactive personalities and professional values can contribute to nursing. This study investigates the relationship between proactive personality traits and professional values among final-year nursing students.

2. Methods

2.1. Study design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational design to investigate the relationship between proactive personality traits and professional values among final-year nursing students.

Dependent variables: Proactive personality traits and professional values of final-year nursing students.

Independent variables: Age, gender, place of residence, school expectations and expectations from the nursing profession.

This study sought answers to the following questions:

- What is the level of proactive personality traits of final-year nursing students?
- What is the level of professional values of final-year nursing students?
- What is the relationship between proactive personality traits and professional values of final-year nursing students?

2.2. Participants and sampling

The study population comprised 170 final-year nursing students enrolled in the nursing department of a university located in eastern Türkiye between November and December 2022. In this faculty, final year nursing students practice Internal Medicine Nursing Care Practices, Surgical Diseases Nursing Care Practices, Obstetrics and Women's Health Nursing Care Practices, Public Health Nursing Care Practices, Child Health and Diseases Nursing Care Practices and Mental Health Nursing Care Practices for five weeks each. They practice for 32 hours a week for 15 weeks each semester. The study included final-year nursing students who took any of these courses for the first time. A power analysis was conducted using OpenEpi Version-3 'Sample Selection with Known Universe,' which determined a sample size of 101 students with an effect size of 80% and a 95% confidence interval.

2.3. Data collection

The study's data was collected through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire forms were converted into an online format using Google Forms and then distributed to the class-representative students via social media groups. Each questionnaire form took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The data was collected online.

2.4. Measurements

Data were collected using the 'Participant Introduction Form,' 'Abbreviated Proactive Personality Scale (APPS)' and 'Professional Nursing Values Scale (NPVS),' developed by the researchers following a review of the relevant literature.

2.4.1. Introductory information form

This form, which the researchers developed through a review of the literature, consists of five questions that inquire about the characteristics of final-year nursing students, such as age, gender, and choice of nursing specialty voluntarily.

2.4.2. Abbreviated Proactive Personality Scale (APPS)

Adaptation, validity and reliability studies of the Abbreviated Proactive Personality Scale developed by Bateman and Crant and revised by Claes, Beheydt and Lemmens in 2005 were conducted by Akin and Özcan (1,19,20). It consists of a single dimension and has no reverse-coded items. It is a seven-point Likert scale consisting of 10 items. High scores on the scale indicate that individuals have high proactive personality traits. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of this scale has been reported to be .86. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .90.

2.4.3. Professional Nursing Values Scale (NPVS)

This scale, developed by Weis and Schank, was adapted into Turkish by Geçkil et al., and its validity and reliability were tested (21,22). The five-point Likert-type scale of 26 items has five sub-dimensions, including "caring, professionalism, activism, justice and loyalty." The scale is scored between 26 and 130 points, with high scores indicating high professional values. Cronbach's alpha coefficient on this scale was reported to be .92. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .97.

2.5. Data analysis

Data from the study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22 (IBM Corp., Armonk, New York, USA). The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test the normality of the data. Descriptive statistics, independent groups t-test, Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson correlation tests were used to analyze the data. The correlation value (r) of 0.10-0.29 indicates a low-level relationship, 0.30-0.49 indicates a medium-level relationship and 0.50-1.00 indicates a high-level relationship (23). P values <0.05 were accepted as statistically significant.

2.6. Ethical considerations

Prior to commencing the study, ethical approval (date 08.12.2022 and number 2022/26) was obtained from the Social and Humanities Research Ethics Committee of the university where the research was conducted, and institutional approval was obtained from the faculty where the research was conducted. At the same time, informed consent was obtained from the students via an online form before they participated in the study.

3. Results

It was found that the mean age of the final year nursing students who participated in the study was 22.43 ± 1.89 years, 66.3% were female, 67.3% lived in the city centre, 49.5% chose to nurse

voluntarily, 65.3% expected to 'have a career' from school and 40% expected to 'find an easy job' from nursing (Table 1).

The comparison of the descriptive characteristics of the final year nursing students with the mean total scores of the APPS and NPVS and the mean subscale scores of the NPVS is presented in Table 1. It was found that the difference between the mean total scores of the APPS and NPVS and the mean subscale scores of the NPVS and the gender, school expectations and professional expectations of the final-year nursing students was not statistically significant (Table 1).

It was found that the final-year nursing students who had spent most of their lives in the city centre had higher mean total scores on the APPS and NPVS and higher mean subscale scores on caring, professionalism, activism, justice and loyalty than the final-year nursing students who had lived in the district, and the difference between them was statistically significant (Table 1).

It was found that final-year nursing students who voluntarily chose to nurse had higher mean total scores and mean scores for the professionalism, activism and justice subscales of the NPVS than final-year nursing students who did not voluntarily choose to nurse. The difference between them was statistically significant (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of Descriptive Characteristics of Final Year Nursing Students with Mean Total APPS and NPVS Scores and Mean NPVS Subscale Scores.

Descriptive characteristics	n	%	APPS (X±SD)	NPVS (X±SD)	NPVS Sub-dimension (X±SD)				
					Caring	Professionalism	Activism	Justice	Loyalty
	X±SD		Med(Min-Max)						
Age	22.43±1.89		22 (19-32)						
Gender									
Female	67	66.3	48.89±10.24	113.59±14.84	35.73±4.28	30.28±4.51	21.64±3.51	13.28±1.96	12.65±1.90
male	34	33.7	50.79±10.57	109.88±17.70	34.38±5.81	29.44±4.88	20.85±3.83	12.73±2.28	12.47±2.06
Test^β			<i>t</i> : -0.861	<i>t</i> : 1.112	<i>t</i> : 1.321	<i>t</i> : -0.84	<i>t</i> : 1.003	<i>t</i> : 1.192	<i>t</i> : 0.44
p			.392	.274	.19	.404	.32	.23	.66
Previous place of residence/place of maximum residence									
City centre	68	67.3	51.44±9.96 ^a	115.25±13.56 ^a	36.35±4.02 ^a	30.51±3.98 ^a	21.98±3.37 ^a	13.48±1.80 ^a	12.91±1.78 ^a
District	20	19.8	43.45±8.08 ^b	102.20±16.33 ^b	31.95±4.91 ^b	27.60±5.28 ^b	19.30±3.43 ^b	11.80±2.16 ^b	11.55±1.84 ^b
Town/Village	13	12.9	48.92±12.30	112.76±20.76	34.76±6.58	31.00±5.83	21.38±4.25	13.07±2.62	12.53±2.47
Test^β			<i>KW</i> : 11.111	<i>KW</i> : 9.946	<i>KW</i> : 11.701	<i>KW</i> : 6.288	<i>KW</i> : 9.771	<i>KW</i> : 9.674	<i>KW</i> : 7.045
p			.004	.007	.003	.043	.008	.008	.030
Choosing the nursing programme voluntarily									
Yes	50	49.5	50.42±9.82	115.36±14.91 ^a	36.04±4.33	30.70±4.47 ^a	22.12±3.37 ^a	13.60±1.92 ^a	12.90±2.04
No	18	17.8	46.55±10.92	102.50±18.87 ^b	32.61±6.15	27.16±5.88 ^b	19.22±4.03 ^b	11.77±2.39 ^b	11.72±1.70
Partly	33	32.7	49.81±10.81	113.15±13.72	35.57±4.48	30.48±3.54	21.42±3.40	13.06±1.86	12.60±1.37
Test^β			<i>KW</i> : 1.289	<i>KW</i> : 8.102	<i>KW</i> : 4.419	<i>KW</i> : 6.641	<i>KW</i> : 7.768	<i>KW</i> : 11.192	<i>KW</i> : 5.021
p			.525	.017	.110	.036	.021	.004	.081
Expectations from school									
Having a profession	66	65.3	49.98±9.14	114.01±14.74	35.68±4.32	30.57±4.35	21.62±3.54	13.39±1.90	12.74±1.92
Graduating from school	14	13.9	45.28±14.17	104.57±20.51	32.92±6.98	27.57±5.74	20.28±4.08	11.92±2.73	11.85±1.83
Making money	21	20.8	50.95±10.84	112.01±15.12	35.57±4.46	29.80±4.36	21.33±3.63	12.95±1.96	12.61±2.03
Test^β			<i>KW</i> : 1.529	<i>KW</i> : 2.987	<i>KW</i> : 1.432	<i>KW</i> : 4.251	<i>KW</i> : 1.333	<i>KW</i> : 4.764	<i>KW</i> : 2.361
p			.465	.225	.489	.119	.514	.092	.307
Expectations from the nursing profession									
Being a good nurse	41	39.0	49.85±10.45	111.53±17.05	34.90±5.32	30.02±4.95	21.12±3.89	13.09±2.27	12.39±1.94
Having a career	18	17.0	52.55±9.55	115.44±12.70	36.00±3.85	30.50±3.63	22.38±2.61	13.33±1.84	13.22±1.62
Easy to find a job	42	40.0	47.92±10.48	111.80±16.09	35.33±4.86	29.76±4.77	21.19±3.73	13.00±2.02	12.52±2.06
Test^β			<i>KW</i> : 2.37	<i>KW</i> : .512	<i>KW</i> : .708	<i>KW</i> : .286	<i>KW</i> : 1.203	<i>KW</i> : .495	<i>KW</i> : 2.417
p			.305	.774	.702	.876	.548	.781	.299

#t: t-test. ^β KW: Kruskal-Wallis tests were used. ^{a-b}: Difference between groups

It was found that the final-year nursing students had a mean total score of 49.53 ± 10.34 on the APPS and a mean total score of 112.34 ± 15.87 on the NPVS and had a proactive personality and high professional values above the medium level. It was found that the mean score of the caring sub-dimension of the NPVS was 35.27 ± 4.86 , the mean score of the professionalism sub-dimension was 30.00 ± 4.63 , the mean score of the activism sub-dimension was 21.37 ± 3.63 , the mean score of the justice sub-dimension was 13.09 ± 2.08 and the mean score of the loyalty sub-dimension was 12.59 ± 1.95 and the scores obtained from all the sub-dimensions were high (Table 2).

Table 2. Total Means of APPS, NPVS and NPVS Subscales for Final Year Nursing Students

Scales	X \pm SD	Med(Min-Max Puan)	Cronbach α
NPVS total score	49.53 \pm 10.34	49.00 (22-68)	.904
APSS total score	112.34 \pm 15.87	116.50 (61-130)	.971
Caring	35.27 \pm 4.86	36.50 (19-40)	.915
Professionalism	30.00 \pm 4.63	31.00 (15-35)	.918
Activism	21.37 \pm 3.63	22.00 (11-25)	.925
Justice	13.09 \pm 2.08	14.00 (7-15)	.880
Loyalty	12.59 \pm 1.95	12.00 (7-15)	.676

In Table 3, it was found that the differences found in the comparisons of final year nursing students' mean total score of APPS, mean total score of NPVS and mean sub-dimension scores of NPVS were statistically positive and moderately significant (Table 3).

Table 3. Correlations Between Mean Scale Total and Subscale Scores for Final Year Nursing Students

	NPVS	NPVS Sub-dimensions				
APPS		<i>Caring</i>	<i>Professionalism</i>	<i>Activism</i>	<i>Justice</i>	<i>Loyalty</i>
r	.477**	.414**	.465**	.444**	.413**	.486**
p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

** The correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

4. Discussion

This study examined the relationship between proactive personality traits and professional values in final-year nursing students. Individuals with higher levels of proactive personality traits are more emotionally stable, better able to cope with stress in their environment, and more likely to create opportunities to improve performance than those with lower proactive personality traits (2). In the study, final-year nursing students were found to have proactive personality traits above the average level. Kong et al., in studies of undergraduate nursing students in China, and Hu et al., in studies of university students, reported that students had proactive personality traits above the average level (2,24). Our results support the literature. This shows that university students can take initiative and action rather than being passive and reactive.

The study found that the proactive personality of final-year nursing students did not change significantly according to gender. Aybatan, Er, Demir and Arabacı reported no significant difference between gender and proactive personality traits (25,27). A study conducted by Al-Omari and Al-Ghanbosi on nursing students in Oman found that gender was not a significant variable for proactive personality (16). Our results support the literature. The proactive characteristics of men are likely higher because we come from a patriarchal society and the expectations placed on men, such as being brave, taking

responsibility. taking initiative and taking risks when necessary. There is evidence that this perception has changed in contemporary society (28,29). Especially in the university environment. this perception has been destroyed. and it is common for women to be brave. take initiative. and take risks.

The environment in which individuals live and their opportunities can influence personality development (30). The present study observed that final-year nursing students living in the city centre had significantly higher proactive personalities than those living in towns and districts. No study in the literature examined a similar parameter. The fact that the city centre offers more opportunities for a proactive personality and that proactive people prefer to live in the city centre may have caused this result.

The study found that variables such as voluntary choice of department. expectations from school and the nursing profession were not important variables for proactive personality. Proactive individuals will likely take every opportunity to exceed normal job expectations (31). As they act according to the situation they find themselves in or the benefits of the process. it can be assumed that they are not influenced by variables such as choice of department. expectations from school and the nursing profession.

The results of this study showed that final-year nursing students had high professional values. Karadağlı. Elmalı. Okuyan et al. reported that nursing students had high professional values (32,34). The study found that the professional values of final-year nursing students did not vary according to gender. Similar results were reported in studies conducted among nursing students in Iran (35). Our findings are in line with the literature. It can be assumed that the courses for developing nursing philosophy and professional values in nursing education in our country positively affect the perception of professional values of both genders.

The study found that the professional values of final-year nursing students living in the city centre were significantly higher than those living in the district. In contrast to our findings. Elmalı found no change in students' professional values according to their place of residence (33). This finding may be due to the personal characteristics of the final-year nursing students who participated in the study.

It was found that final-year nursing students who voluntarily chose the nursing department had higher professional values than the others. Similar results were reported by Okuyan et al.. Avcı et al. and Taşkıran et al. (34,36,37). Mollaoğlu et al. reported that those who voluntarily chose the nursing profession had a better understanding of the theoretical knowledge and a more positive attitude towards the profession (38). Individuals choosing a career that aligns with their preferences may increase their motivation and make them happy. This may have a direct impact on the professionalism of the profession and. thus. on the development of the profession (39).

In this study. it was found that the professional values of final-year nursing students mainly remained the same according to their expectations from school and the nursing profession. In Karadağlı's study. expectation from school was found to be a significant variable for final-year nursing students' professional values. In contrast. expectation from the nursing profession was not found to be a significant variable in parallel with our finding (32). On the other hand. Elmalı reported that students' professional values did not change significantly according to their expectations from school and the nursing profession (33). Shi et al. concluded that society and families' expectations of the nursing profession and the proportion of those who want their children to become nurses are low in China. However. it was reported that this perception started to change with the feeling of commitment to the

profession after the pandemic (17). It can be said that this result may be because the final-year nursing students' expectations of the nursing profession and school are close.

The study found a positive and moderately significant relationship between proactive personality traits and professional nursing values among final-year nursing students. Shi et al. found a positive and significant relationship between proactive personality traits and professional identity in a study of nursing students (17). Davik et al. found that proactive personality traits influenced professionalism in a study of nurses (18). Demir and Arabacı reported a positive and moderate relationship between proactive personality traits and attitudes towards the profession and desire for career development in a study conducted with another professional group (27). Our findings support the literature and show that proactive personality traits are important for professional values, which are the cornerstone of the nursing profession.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study found that students had proactive personalities and high professional values above the medium level, and their professional values increased as their proactive personality traits increased. Our findings are valuable in highlighting the importance of having a proactive personality and high professional values in nursing, characterized by its role in providing care and treatment to people. The fact that nursing students with strong proactive personalities have high professional values is promising for clinical practice and the profession's future. As these students will work in the field in the future, they can offer more practical and ethical solutions to their problems and improve the existing order. In this direction, it may be recommended that students develop proactive personality traits and professional nursing values, increase their awareness, and conduct the study with larger groups.

Limitations

The study's main limitation is that the data could not be generalized to the population as they were collected from one faculty.

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