

ILLUMINATING PROFESSIONALISM AMONG NURSES IN THEIR DOCUMENTATION WITHIN THE MALAYSIA CONTEXT – A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Nursing documentation is the key to nursing care in hospitals. Pertinent literature suggest nursing documentation that contains evidence regarding the comprehensive level of nursing care has a strong correlation with nurses' professional practice. Despite the significance of nursing documentation in nursing practice, no study has been conducted and published on this crucial aspect of nursing practice in Malaysia. Hence, this study utilised a qualitative design to explore the evidence of professionalism in nursing in Malaysia, specifically in the context of their nursing documentation. A total of 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with nurses involved in completing the nursing documentation. Thematic analysis was used to identify categories and themes in nurses' accounts of their documentation, in relation to professionalism in nursing. Findings reveal that the nurses could not demonstrate their comprehension of the existence of professionalism within their documentation. These findings are likely to suggest the need to emphasise the quality of nursing documentation in nursing practice, besides the significance of education to improve professionalism among nurses in Malaysia.

Keywords: Professionalism in Nursing; Nursing Documentation; Malaysia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Birks, Francis and Abdullah (2008) argue that nursing in Malaysia still has a long way to go in terms of its nurses' professionalism. A similar argument was shared by Merican (2006), the former minister for the Ministry of Health, Malaysia, who stated that the public's perception of nursing standards in Malaysia had declined over the years. Merican argues that present-day nurses are less skilled, less caring and less efficient compared to their predecessors. He contended that these nurses lacked professionalism. Although a considerable amount of research on nursing practice in Malaysia has been conducted, there is a paucity of information and/or lack of literature exploring the existence of professionalism among nurses in Malaysia. In contrast, a vast amount of research pertaining to professionalism in nursing, besides studies exploring the quality of nursing documentation is available internationally.

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