

## Factors Affecting Professional Identity among Nurse Interns'

\* Dr. Laila Ahmed Abd Elhamed, \*\*Dr. Asmaa Saber Ahmed Elborai

\*Lecturer of Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing- Ain Shams University

\*\* Lecturer of Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing- Ain Shams University

### Abstract

**Background:** Refining the professional identity of nursing intern is remarkable for improving the number of new registered nurses and enabling the scarcity of nursing staffs. The clinical internship is a crucial era for the formulation of professional identity. **Aim:** the current study aimed to assess factors affecting professional identity among nurse interns'. **Design:** A descriptive cross –sectional design was used to carry out this study. **Setting:** the study was conducted at Ain Shams University Hospital where nurse interns are having their training internship program, **Subjects:** The subjects of this study was include (120) nurse interns selected by simple random sample technique. **Tools of Data collection:** the current study was collected by professional identification scale. **Results:** More than three quarters (78.3%) of nurse intern had a high level of professional identity. While less than one quarter (21.7%)of them had low level of professional identity. As for total nurse interns' views of the factor affecting on professional identity, points to statistically significant relations with their, and. Moreover, a significant association is observed between place of birth, graduation grade, first choice is nursing profession and professional identity **Conclusion:** the current study findings, concluded that the majority of nurse interns' had high level of professional Identity. **Recommendations:** the study recommended that the nursing faculties and clinical nursing units cooperate to construct a strong and comprehensive career planning syllabus for nursing interns, targets to improving their professional identity.

**Key words:** *Professional Identity, Nurses Interns,*

### INTRODUCTION

Professional identity (PI) in nursing is definite as a “wisdom of oneself, and in relationship with others, which is predisposed by physical characteristics, standards, and beliefs of the nursing discipline, consequential in an individual thoughtful, acting and sense similar a nurse” (*Godfery and Young 2021*).

Professional identity is defined as “the attitudes, morals, awareness, views and skills joint with others in a specialized group”, Many features can inspiration the development of PI in students. Features such as the being of discrepancies and alterations between the

The construction of identity is defined as a self-perception about the career founded on behaviors, opinions, emotional state, values, inspirations, and capabilities. professional identity, is a vital issue in growing self-

nursing schooling atmosphere and the clinical situation (i.e., the theory-practice gap) and the deficiency of a pure image of the nursing profession in the community affect nurses' PI (*Haghighat ,et al 2020*).

In case high quality and harmless care wants moral nursing practice, which is progressively challenging by technological and mechanical progress in health structures Therefore, novel approaches are required to provision the nurses' moral care establishment. Gaining of moral capabilities occurs in a course called moral growth. Moral growth is well-defined as the modification in moral manners over time. (*Davidson , et al 2018*).

confidence, sense of belonging to the profession and starting personal communication among nurses (*Harrison,2020*).

Professional identity is a significant

factor persuading nursing interns' profession picks, i.e., a inferior professional identity among nursing interns grades in a bigger intention to quit, which leads to a damage of nursing capacities. For nursing students, professional identity denotes to the method of profession development and settling their professional role in their existing position. The nursing students' professional identity designed in training is closely associated with their future job choice (Goodol and Godfrey,2021) .

The professional identity of nursing students will disturb on their shift from student nursing to professional nursing and their readiness to continue in the nursing career. As nursing students pass in the field of nursing, their professional identity assists as the basis of their nursing practice and affects their whole profession (Philippa , et al 2021) . The clinical internship is a portion of clinical teaching. Clinical internship is a crucial period for nursing students to contract the professional identity (Kim , et al 2021).

The inspiration factors of professional identity among the nursing students in colleges are as follows: Firstly, personal characteristics such as the sex (the female nursing students' professional identity is higher) ( Jing, 2014), education level (the diploma students' professional identity is higher than baccalaureate nursing students). Secondly, the influence of model, such as role modelling and the model of teacher could develop students'professional identity. Lastly, the students with higher self-efficacy and flexibility have a higher level of professional identity. (Mei XX, et al 2022).

### **Significance of the study:**

Professional identity plays a crucial role of the development process and expansion of nursing as a profession. This process takes place over time, includes gaining insight into professional performances and promotion of professional ideals and ethics. Moreover, positively associated with, the clinical performance of the nurse intern as well as, patient satisfaction, and care quality (Wang, et al 2022)

The improvement of professional identity

is a continuous process and it is serious to the effective and harmless practice of all health professionals' personnel, including nurses. The process is influenced by factors such as professional socialization and experiences in practice. A major amount of the development of professional identity occurs during faculty years (Ashby , et al 2019). Thus, the current study will be conducted to assess factors affecting professional identity among nurse interns'.

### **Aim of the study:**

The study was aimed to assessing the factors affecting professional identity among nurse interns'.

### **Research Question:**

What are the factors affecting on professional identity among nurse interns'?

### **SUBJECTS AND METHODS**

**The methodology of this study was presented under four main designs as follow:**

#### **I. Technical design**

The technical design elaborates a description of the research design, setting, subjects of the study, and tools of data collection.

#### **Research design**

A descriptive cross –sectional design was used to carrying out this study. **Setting**

The study was conducted at Ain- Shams University Hospitals where nurse interns are having their training internship program. These include Ain-Shams University Hospital, El-Demerdash Hospital, Pediatrics University Hospital, Cardiovascular Hospital and geriatric hospital.

#### **Subjects of the study**

The subjects of this study was include (120) nurse interns out of the total number of (260) nurse interns

**Sample size:**

The sample size was calculated with the equation developed by (Thompson (2012).

$$n = N \times P (1-p)$$

$$[N-1(d2/z2)] p(1-p)$$

n = sample size

N = population size

d = the error rate is 0.05

z = the standard score corresponding to the significance level is 0.95 and is equal to 1.96

p = availability of property and neutral=0.50

**Tools of data collection:**

The data for this study was collected by professional identification scale. Consists of two parts:

Part 1: Nurse Interns' characteristics data such as age, sex, level of education, graduation grade, first major choice is nursing profession and only child in family.

Part 2: professional identification scale was assessing the influencing factors affecting nursing interns' professional identity during internship year. It was adopted from (Brown, et al, 2011) and consisting of 10 items.

**Scoring system** response of each statement was measured on a five -point Likert Scale that ranged from never (1) to very often

subjects who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the main study sample.

**4-Field work:**

The fieldwork of the study took two months started at the beginning of March 2024 after securing all official permissions. It was

(5). The scores of items were summed-up and the total scores were divided by the number of the items, giving the mean score for each items. These scores were converted into percent score. A higher average score on the scale indicates a high level of professional identity if the scores (<75%). While, low average score indicates low level of professional identity if the scores (>75%).

**II. Operational Design**

The operational design for this study included three phases namely: preparatory phase, pilot study and field work.

**Preparatory phase:**

The researcher revised recent and past, local and international linked literature using textbooks, scientific articles, periodicals, journals and internet. This served in preparing the tools for data collection as well as in writing the literature review.

**Tool reliability:**

The piloting study was utilized to test the reliability of the scale, which was carried out through measuring the internal consistency and calculating Cronbach alpha coefficients. The reliability of the scale established high level with coefficients 0.823.

**Pilot study:**

The pilot study was aimed at investigating the transparency of the language and applicability of the tool and their relevance to the study. It was conducted on 12 of the nurse interns representing about 10% of study sample. The pilot study also helped to estimate the time needed for filling the tools. The study completed by the end of April 2024. The researchers collected data by themselves through meeting each nurse intern individually in the training area, clarifying the aim of the study and the method of filling out the scale about the professional identification, obtaining verbal consent to participate. The researcher met with the nurse interns consecutively in the five hospitals according to their time schedule and rotation. Each nurse intern took from 15 to 20

minutes to fill out the questionnaire. The data were collected 5 days per week in day shifts, from 9: am to 2: pm.

### **Ethical consideration:**

- Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the ethics committee at the Faculty of Nursing Ain Shams University.

- Official permission was obtained from the director of Ain Shams University Hospitals. Additionally, the research team held a meeting with the director of nursing services to explain the study's objectives, garner support, and encourage active participation from nurse interns.

- Prior to data collection, consent was obtained from all participating nurse interns.

- Measures were taken to ensure

### **RESULTS:**

The study sample consisted of 120 nurse interns whose age ranged between 22 and 24 years, median 22.0 years with a majority of them female (56.7%) as presented in table 1. The majority were from urban (50.8%), and had very good graduation degree (57.5%). Their first major choice is nursing profession about (79.2%) and only ( 88.3%) of them had only child in family.

Figure 1 demonstrated that the highest percentage of nurse internes were from general pre university education (90 %).

Concerning the factors affecting on professional identity among nurse interns' in the study sample table 2 indicates the factor I can identify positively with members of this profession (85.8%), and I feel I share characteristics with other members of the profession (85.0%) were the highest, while the I feel like I am a member of this profession was the least viewed ( 72.5%).

privacy and the right for participants to refuse participation or withdraw from the study at any point. All collected data was treated as confidential and used solely for research purposes

### **III. Statistical Design:**

Data collected from the studied sample was revised, coded and entered using the computer software. Data entry and statistical analysis were fulfilled using the statistical package for social sciences (IBM SPSS 26.0). Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages for non-numerical data and mean, standard deviation (+ SD) for parametric numerical data. Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to assess reliability of scale. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to identify the independent predictors of professional identity and affecting factors. The statistical significant was considered at  $P < 0.05$ .

The figure 2 demonstrates that a substantial majority of nurse interns exhibit a high level of professional identity, with 78.3% endorsing this attribute, while a smaller proportion indicate a low professional identity, at 21.7%.

As for total nurse interns' views of the factor affecting on professional identity, table 3 points to statistically significant relations with their pre university education, (0.505) and first choice is nursing profession ( $p = 0.034$ ). Moreover, a significant association is observed between place of birth and professional identity levels, where individuals born in rural areas show a higher prevalence of high professional identity compared to those born in urban areas,  $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ . Conversely, no significant association is found between sex and professional identity levels, ( $p = 0.144$ ), respectively.

Table 4 demonstrated that the nurse interns with a general pre-university education and place of birth were statistically significant independent positive predictors of their score of total factors affecting on professional identity.

Table (1) Personal characteristics of nurse interns in the study sample (n =120).

Personal characteristic	N	%
<b>Age</b>		
21- <23	25	20.8
23	87	72.5
24 or more	8	6.7
Mean±SD Median	22.86±0.51 23	
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	52	43.3
Female	68	56.7
<b>Pre university education</b>		
General	106	88.3
Institute	14	16.7
<b>Place of birth</b>		
Rural	59	49.2
Urban	61	50.8
<b>Graduation grade</b>		
Good	33	27.5
Very good	69	57.5
Excellent	18	15
<b>Only child in family</b>		
Yes	14	11.7
No	106	88.3
<b>First major choice is nursing profession</b>		
Yes	95	79.2
No	25	20.8

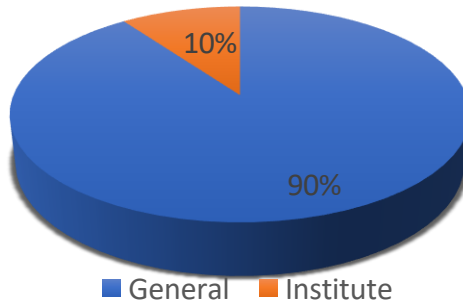


Figure 1: Distribution of the nurse interns in study sample by pre university education  
 Table (2) : Nurse interns' views of the factors affecting Professional identity (N=120)

Items	High		Low	
	N	%	N	%
I feel like I am a member of this profession.	87	72.5	33	27.5
I feel I have strong ties with members of this profession.	89	74.2	31	25.8
I am often ashamed to admit that I am studying for this profession.	98	81.7	18	15.0
I find myself making excuses for belonging to this profession.	91	75.8	29	24.2
I try to hide that I am studying to be part of this profession.	98	81.7	22	18.3
I am pleased to belong to this profession.	94	78.3	26	21.7
I can identify positively with members of this profession.	103	85.8	17	14.2
Being a member of this profession is important to me.	96	80.0	24	20.0
I feel I share characteristics with other members of the profession.	102	85.0	22	18.3
Being a nurse make me happy	93	77.5	27	22.5

Figure 2 Total professional identity levels among nurse interns'

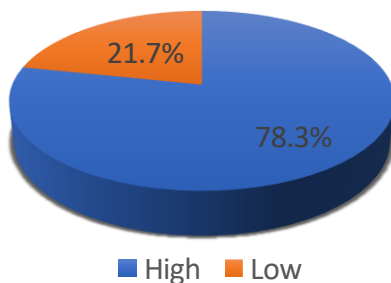


Table (3): Relation between nurse interns' views of the total factor affecting on professional identity and their personal characteristics

	Total professional identity					
	High		Low		Chi-square	
	N	%	N	%	X2	P-value
<b>Age</b>						
22	11	11.7	14	53.8	22.754	0.097
23	75	79.8	12	46.2		
24	8	8.5	0	0.0		
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	44	46.8	8	30.8	2.134	0.144
Female	50	53.2	18	69.2		
<b>Pre university education</b>						
General	84	89.4	22	84.6	0.445	0.505*
Institute	10	10.6	4	15.4		
<b>Place of birth</b>						
Rural	37	39.4	22	84.6	16.688	0.048*
Urban	57	60.6	4	15.4		
<b>Graduation grade</b>						
Good	23	69.7	10	30.3	7.01	0.008*
Very good	45	65.2	24	34.8		
Excellent	12	66.7	6	33.3		
<b>Only child in family</b>						
Yes	8	57.2	6	42.8	4.80	0.003
No	78	73.6	28	26.4		
<b>First major choice is nursing profession</b>						
Yes	54	56.8	41	43.2	4.505	0.034*
No	18	72	7	28		

Table (4) best fitting multiple linear regression for total factors affecting professional identity score

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t. test	P-value	95% CI	
	B	SE	Beta			Lower	Upper
(Constant)	8.041	1.815		4.429	<0.001*	4.445	11.637
Pre university education	0.295	0.078	0.361	3.770	<0.001*	0.450	0.140
Place of birth	0.257	0.070	0.312	3.667	<0.001*	0.396	0.118

Dependent Variable: Total professional identity

r-square = 0.529    f= 11.189    P-value &lt;0.001\*

## DISCUSSION

Professional identity is a main concern in the transition from students to nurse interns and probable affects on retaining rates. Students report that they expect to feel relaxed in their jobs and confident in themselves after graduation, but these prospects are often not encountered. A disengage between place of

work opportunities and reality has been responsible for high abrasion rates among newly graduated nurses. A high percentage of anew qualified nurses report negative feelings such as frustration and stress often stemming from inflexibility in the system they have entered Zeng et al (2022).

The study was aimed at assessing the factors affecting on professional identity among

nurse interns. The results of the study indicate that, about three quarter of nurse interns having high level of professional identity. This means the transitions between theoretical and clinical settings, and aligning these transitions may allow nurse intern to improve truthful prospects of nursing profession and positively affect on their professional identities, and a statistically significant relation with their pre university education, and first choice is nursing profession. Moreover, a significant association is observed between place of birth and professional identity, which means nurse interns' professional identities progress throughout their lifetimes, from before ingoing nursing education, throughout their years of study and clinical practice, and continue to develop during their careers. However, education is a significant period during these time students gain the knowledge and skills that separate nurse interns as professional health care workers from unprofessional people.

This finding is agreement with the results reported by Alharbi, Kuhn & Morphet, (2022). The results of this study display that first-year students previously have relatively strong professional identities upon entry to their respective programmed of study. also Fitzgerald,(2020)., who examined students at an early level of training reported similar high levels of professional identity to those reported in the current investigation. In congruence with this, a study in china Professional identity of Chinese nursing students during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak: A nation-wide cross-sectional study Zhang et al. (2021).

Regarding factors affecting professional identity among nurse interns the present study could find a statistical significant with pre university education, graduation grade and first choose is nursing profession which refers to an individual's capability to construction knowledge in response to changing situational demands, making it related to when considering how a student develops from a beginner into an expert, through knowledge building. Similar results were also reported by Zeng et al (2022) The nursing interns' professional identity is

related to some demographic characteristics (i.e., residential status, first major choice, education).

According the present study bivariate analysis revealed that the pre university education and place of birth had higher statistical significance as a positive predictor. Which means that the reason may be the rural areas have an economic level, lower capabilities, and unsuitable working conditions.in this respect, a study of research on professional identity of nursing students during their internship and construction of promotion strategies Jing, (2014).

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the majority of nurse interns' had high level of professional Identity and a statistically significant relation with some personal characteristics such as pre university education, and first choice is nursing profession.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the results of this study, the following recommendations are suggested: - The nursing college should pay attention to the nursing interns who lived in the urban and not first choice is nursing profession due to difficult adapt with the new profession. - Improving nursing interns' intention of choosing nursing as a career after graduation is important for alleviating the shortage of nursing personnel. - Furthermore, the nursing faculties and clinical nursing units cooperate to construct a strong and comprehensive career planning syllabus for nursing interns, targets to improving their professional identity References.

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