

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY AND PROFESSIONALISM OF PROFESSORS FROM THE STANDPOINT OF MIDWIFERY STUDENTS AT MIDWIFERY AND NURSING COLLEGES OF TEHRAN

Zeynab Zamani Jughi¹, Masoomeh Kheirkhah^{2*}, Ezat Ja'afarJalal³, Hamid Haghani⁴

1. *M.S. student in Midwifery Management at Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran*
2. *Ph.D. in Medical Training, assistant professor at Midwifery Department at Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran*
3. *Faculty Member at Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran*
4. *Ph.D. in Statistics and Faculty Member at Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran*

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Professors' professionalism has a positive influence on students' character formation, interest in education, self-efficacy, motivation and academic achievement and indicates their academic success. Current study aims to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and professionalism of professors from the viewpoint of midwifery students at Midwifery and Nursing colleges of Tehran in 2016.

Methodology: The study was descriptive – correlational; samples were all B.S. Midwifery students at Medical Sciences colleges and tool used for gathering information was demographic data, Ansari self-efficacy questionnaire and Fogarety questionnaire for professors' professionalism. Data were edited and analyzed on SPSS Software.

Results: Midwifery students' average rate of self-efficacy was 74.59 which showed a high self-efficacy among students. Results of Pearson's Correlational Test showed a meaningful relation between professionalism in terms of professional appeal with diligence ($r = .167, p = .027$) and self-efficacy ($r = .152, p = .044$), and between professionalism in terms of independence with diligence ($r = .207, p = .006$) and self-efficacy ($r = .152, p = .021$).

Discussion and conclusion: Professional appeal and job independence were related to self-efficacy. Thus, the more independent the Midwifery professors, the more diligent and self-efficient the Midwifery students.

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Introduction

Self-efficacy is the sense of self-esteem, efficiency and competence in dealing with issues [1]. In educational environments, self-efficacy is defined as students' self-ability to fulfill their responsibilities and assignments [2] and consists three dimensions of diligence, effort and self-regulation which has a positive influence on reaction to and encountering difficulties [3]. By setting thoughts, feeling and behaviors has a positive influence on goals, controls and self-evaluation in the process of effective learning [4]. Self-efficacy can be defined as the indicator of educational achievement and success [5].

Professors have a great influence on students' academic growth and achievement through improving students' motivation and their scientific and self-regulatory skills [6]. Professionalism is one of professors' abilities and qualifications [7] which

Corresponding Author: Masoomeh Kheirkhah, Ph.D. in Medical Training, assistant professor at Midwifery Department at Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

can greatly enhance the process of education [8]. Professionalism's standards include skills, competence and character of an individual [9]. Prerequisites of professionalism include specific criteria of independence of action [10], believing in public service and self-control reflections [11], and in professional appeal and scientific authority [12]. Professionalism is based on centralized professional autonomy [13]. Professional effort to achieve independence of action and be recognized as an independent profession to adopt suitable solutions and control activities, will envisage an appropriate professional image in students' minds [14]. With a change in needs of professors' society and with frequent update of knowledge [15], they actively take advantage of educational environments [16]. In clinical professions, updated information and the ability to transfer them [17] and sufficient fluency to do things greatly influence students' learning and success [18]. Professionalism among professors who adopt novel methods and strategies for teaching can have the strongest influence on students' self-efficacy [19].

Profession appeal, interest, job commitment [13, 20], and morality [21] increase a sense of commitment to the welfare of patients among students; believing in public service reflections has a strong influence on validity and positive image of a profession [22], and enhances public view towards that profession [23]. Midwifery is an important field which has a decisive influence on the health of mother and infant and on achieving the goals in the millennia. The field's professors have the responsibility to train the students on whom they have positive technical, behavioral and cognitive influences in terms of obstetric emergencies and students' self-efficacy [24]. A study of professors' professionalism can help to clarify the current situation and provide a proper basis for students' academic progress and achievement [7]. Results from the study of nursing and midwifery students indicate that theoretical knowledge acquired during the training process is inconsistent with clinical conditions [12], and obstacles such as working pressure [25], a conflict between training and patient care [26], unnecessary stresses in hospital environments, the humiliation of students at clinics [27], the loss of professional autonomy in the clinical areas [28] have caused the professionalism's effects to fade out [29] and gaps to be observed in self-controlling professional behaviors [30]. Study and research are very important to cope with educational and training insufficiencies and for adopting proper strategies. Thus, the current study was conducted to investigate the relationship between B.S. Midwifery students' self-efficacy and professors' professionalism at Medical sciences universities in Tehran in 2016, so as to be able to take proper and effective actions in the field of human resources management and to improve the quality of training and education through results from the study and the recognition of current situation.

Methodology

This study was a descriptive-correlational cross-sectional one carried out in 2015- 2016. The study sample included all undergraduate students of Midwifery at Iran Nursing and Midwifery Schools, and also Tehran and Shahid Beheshti Nursing and Midwifery Schools. Sampling was performed as a census. Nursing undergraduate students from 4th to 8th semesters studying at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran were enrolled. For data analysis, demographic data, Ansari self-efficacy questionnaire [31] and Fogarety questionnaire for professors' professionalism [11] were used.

Self-Efficacy questionnaire provided by Ansari et al. is designed based on existing standard questionnaires on self-efficacy and includes three components of effort, diligence and self-regulation, and consist of 20 items. The component diligence includes 7 items (1 – 7), self-regulation includes 7 items (8 to 14) and the component effort include 6 items (20-15). Each item is graded based on 5-episode Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" (Score: 1) to "Strongly Agree" (score 5). The validity and reliability of the questionnaire contents were examined by Ansari and the Cronbach's Alpha 87 respectively [31].

Again, the validity of the questionnaire contents was confirmed by 10 Midwifery and Management professors at Iran University of Medical Sciences while its reliability and internal homology were analyzed through Cronbach's Alpha 81. The questionnaire was completed by B.S. Midwifery students. A grade between 20 and 40 indicates a low rate of self-efficacy; a grade between 40 and 60, indicates an average one; and a grade above 60, indicates a high rate of self-efficacy. The rate of professors' professionalism was analyzed through Fogarety professionalism questionnaire [32]. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were analyzed and confirmed in Iran by Mowlaii et al. [44] and Arvin et al. [11] through Cronbach's 93 and 85 respectively. The questionnaire consisted 25 questions which was reduced to 21 questions by Arvin after revising and localizing, and composed of 5 components of scientific authority, the general reflection of service in the society, professional appeal, independence of action and self-control. Questions related to scientific authority [1 – 4], questions reflected to public service [5 – 7], questions reflected to self-control [8 – 12], questions reflected to professional appeal [13 – 17] and four questions related to independence of action [18 – 21]. The questionnaire has options of very low, low, medium, high and very high, and is graded from scores of 1 to 5. Questions 20, 91, 21, 11, 9, 6 and 4 if option "totally agree" is selected, are interpreted as negative points for professionalism. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were confirmed by ten experts and through the Cronbach's alpha 71 respectively. Ethical considerations adhered to in this study include obtaining permission from Iran University of Medical Sciences Ethics Committee with number 1394.9211373212 IR. IUMS. REC and permissions required to conduct researches from the university's Research Assistant and its relevant authorities at the studied universities, the acquisition of informed written consent, the observance of confidentiality of information and without the need to mention the name and last name of the samples, the use of information only in line with the objectives of the research, and the observance and reserving of copyright for Iran University of Medical Sciences. The questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher after explaining the objectives of the study to the students of Iran and Shahid Beheshti Universities, and also the students of Tehran University of Medical Sciences and answers were given to students' possible questions. Gathered data were analyzed using the SPSS Software Version 16. The results in terms of demographic characteristics, the majority (74.2%), the studied samples were single and related to age group of 22 to 24 years (53.4%); and in terms of academic semester 4 (25.3%); and in terms of semesters 2 or 8 (23%). The highest frequency distribution of the samples was at the University of Tehran with the number of 82 patients (45.8%). 120 people (67%) of the students were local and an average economic status. Mean and standard deviation score of self-efficacy was 74.59 ± 9.15 , and 170 people (95%) stated a high rate of efficacy; 8 people (5.4%) stated an average rate of efficacy; and only 1 person stated a low efficacy. Numerical indicators of self-efficacy and its aspects in studied units are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. mean and standard deviation of self-efficacy components of B.S. Midwifery students in the city of Tehran

Standard deviation	mean	maximum	minimum	self-efficacy
3.86	25.97	35	11	Diligence (7-35)
3.50	26.19	35	12	Self-regulation (7-35)
3.57	22.41	30	10	Effort (6-30)
9.15	74.59	99	36	self-efficacy (20-100)

The average number obtained for self-efficacy is higher than the tool's average one in all components, and the number obtained for self-regulation was the highest (26.19) and the number obtained for effort was the lowest (22.41).

Table 2. Numerical indicators of professionalism and its components in studied units in 2016

Professionalism	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Standard deviation
Scientific authority	13.44	20	4	2.68
Believing in the general reflection of service	9.32	14	5	1.53
Professional appeal	15.55	25	5	4.04
Independence of action	11.74	16	5	1.82
Self-control	14.80	21	6	2.47
Professionalism	61.87	80	39	7.23

Mean and standard deviation of professors' was 7.23 ± 61.87 . The component professional appeal had the highest grade (15.55) with standard deviation of 4.04 and general reflection of service had the lowest grade (9.32) with standard deviation of 1.53 from the standpoint of students. The relationship between Midwifery students' self-efficacy and professors' professionalism is shown in table 3.

Table 3. the correlation of self-efficacy and its components with professionalism and its components – 2016

Self-efficacy Professionalism	Diligence	Self-regulation	Effort	Self-efficacy
Scientific authority	r=0.047 P=0.538	r=0.045 P=0.553	r=0.001 P=0.993	r=0.037 P=0.626
Believing in the general reflection of service	r=-0.004 P=0.962	r=0.018 P=0.811	r=0.102 P=0.176	r=0.045 P=0.551
Professional appeal	r=0.167 P=0.027	r=0.072 P=0.343	r=0.137 P=0.071	r=0.152 P=0.044
Independence of action	r=0.207 P=0.006	r=0.082 P=0.278	r=0.146 P=0.053	r=0.174 P=0.021
Self-control	r=-0.017 P=0.827	r=0.026 P=0.733	r=-0.031 P=0.686	r=-0.010 P=0.898
Professionalism	r=0.154 P=0.040	r=0.095 P=0.204	r=0.114 P=0.130	r=0.145 P=0.052

According to the results of "Pearson's Correlational Test" shown in table 15 – 4, the correlation between professionalism in terms of professional appeal with diligence ($r = .167$; $p = .027$) and self-efficacy ($r = .044$; $p = .152$) was significant; and in terms of independence of action with diligence ($r = .207$; $p = .006$) and self-efficacy ($r = .174$; $p = .021$) was also positive but insignificant. Also, correlation with professionalism was positive, but also very insignificant. There was a positive and significant correlation for professionalism ($r = .154$; $p = .040$).

Discussion and Conclusion

Academic environments suffer from a shortage of educational and training facilities, from a reduced rate of students' self-efficacy [32], and from a decreased number of experienced and professors [34]. Self-efficacy is an educational challenge [35]. Professors have a defining role here [36]. An increased number of professional professors is a crucial in educational reforms to meet students' needs [37]. Professors have the potential to influence students positively or negatively [38]. The results of the Midwifery students' status of self-efficacy study showed that the average grade of self-efficacy is high. In Sohrabi et al [39] research, the average grade of students' self-efficacy at Tehran University of Medical Sciences was 12.116,

and the high rate of self-efficacy was associated with professors' management style [39]. Autonomy of teachers and their management style affected students' self-efficacy, and the components independence of action and professionalism of professors led Midwifery students to increase their self-efficacy. Results of Sierakowska study [12] showed that 96 percent of the students mentioned the ability to transfer knowledge (scientific authority) as the first feature of a professional teacher. Also the ability to have a non-verbal and verbal communication, to use educational tools and have a friendly attitude towards students, to communicate with them in the class are effective factors in the ability to transfer knowledge. In the study, scientific authority with an average of 13.44 was mentioned as the third effective factor in the professionalism of Midwifery professors from the viewpoint of Midwifery students. The experience of the researcher shows that there is a positive and proper relationship between professors and students, and that professors adopt active student-centered methods in class and clinical environments. Other influential professionalism's factors for students in the field are so high that it scored more than the rate of knowledge transfer. The results of studies conducted by Kheirkhah, Mashkut and Arabshahi [40] entitled "an investigation into the relationship between professional ethics of teachers and students' self-efficacy at Yazd University of Medical Sciences in 2015", found that the mean and standard deviation of Midwifery students' self-efficacy was 55.1 ± 26.09 , and teachers' professional ethics was 82.61 ± 44.8 , respectively. The relationship between these two variables with the Pearson correlation coefficient was $r = p = 0.001 .321$. The linear formula regression showed the relationship between two variables self-efficacy and professional ethics as $Y = 93/68 + 0/321 X$, and an increased rate of professional ethics of teachers have resulted in students' self-efficacy score to increase by $P = 0/0001$. And there was a significant statistical relationship between personal characteristics of teachers, the fluency in course content, the mastery of teaching methods, the observance of educational rules and students' self-efficacy [40]. In this study, there was a relationship between professional appeal and independence of action, self-efficacy and professionalism. Factors influencing the difference of produced results include the environmental difference of the two study, and the difference of professors' components of professionalism in terms of teaching theoretical and clinical academic subjects considering limitations of clinical training and education. In the study conducted by Ze-Ju Zhang [41], the average rate of students' self-efficacy was low. The average rate for male students was 27.3 and 25.1 for females that are inconsistent with the results. The reason for the low rate of self-efficacy in this study can be the alienation and unfamiliarity of students at clinical situations. Sudden transfer of students to clinical environments may cause incompatibility and lack of adaptation among students, and may lead to inefficiency and anxiety. Professional appeal in the professionalism of professors can play an important role in delivery room and in enhancing psychological readiness of students. In Okoronkwo study [42], clinical supervision and professional autonomy were mentioned as the fourth characteristics of a professional professor ($x = 3.68SD = .26$) which is consistent with the results of this research. Clinical supervision enables students to better understand exercises. The results of a study carried out by Bazrafshan [44] showed unacceptable management skills, ingenuity and innovation in providing treatment for various patients and independence of action, which is consistent with the results of this research. The main affecting factors are working pressure, mood, and stressful nature of the work. Environmental stressors affect education. In the this study because of the importance of Midwifery despite physiological normal delivery, delivery room environment had some stresses for all the employees in the delivery and after-delivery-care wards due to medical manipulation and interference in the delivery process; and as doctors and their assistants have responsibility for the results of treatments in our country's medical system, doctors lack proper autonomy. As a result, this component of professionalism of Midwifery professors is undermined. To compensate for the shortage, obstetric clinical faculties resident in the delivery rooms and hospitals are considered to allow further autonomy of the professors in the field of natural delivery which is physiologic and enabling the professors and doctors to serve low-risk mothers without having to deal with any medical interference. If only high-risk patients are referred to professors and gynecologists, unnecessary medical interferences must be avoided. Hence, in addition to reducing the cost of the treatment, the rates of caesarean section in the country will drop; and committed and caring professors can nurture and train students based on what society requires. The results of a study by AZEMIAN [15] which is a qualitative study from the viewpoint of professors, shows that theoretical knowledge and skills, independence, crisis management, interest and professional commitment are factors facilitating professional competencies and are consistent with the results of the current study. Educational failures produce graduates with low professional qualifications who lack practical skills and knowledge, and with a low decision-making ability. A comparison of the results of these two studies reveals the difference between the perspective of professors and students in terms of self-efficacy and functional competence. But both perspectives agree on the failure and shortage of education. Efforts must be made to strengthen the weaknesses and reduce threats. The results of a study made by Rad et al [17] showed that the mean score of Midwifery students about traits and characteristics of professors, passion for teaching and self-control was $3.5 \pm .7$ which is consistent with the results of this study. Professors' increased awareness of, interest in and care for patients led to a theoretical and practical relationship with their patients at clinical environments of which results various classes of society particularly patients and the needy benefit and lead to improvement in the level of clinical education and training of wise and educated people.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, there is a positive statistical correlation between the components professional appeal and independence of professors with diligence and self-efficacy of Midwifery students. Professors' commitment to and interest in teaching and their independence of action increase the rate of students' diligence and self-efficacy. Factors such as work pressure, morale and stressful nature of work, and also students' opinions can influence the results. However, the research team has made all the effort to overcome any barriers to the study and to allocate proper time for student's questions.

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