

NURSES' ADHERENCE TO NURSING ETHICS: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

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Abstract

Backgrounds: Nurses' adherence to nursing ethics is crucial for ensuring high standards of patient care and professional integrity. Ethical decision-making in nursing practice is influenced by various factors, including education, organizational support, and individual beliefs. Understanding these factors can enhance the implementation of ethical practices in nursing. This study highlights the importance of continuous ethical education and supportive supervision to enhance nurses' ethical compliance. It provides important insights that can guide nursing practice toward higher ethical standards and a deeper understanding of ethical values in the nursing profession. **Objectives:** This research aims to synthesize literature on the factors influencing nurses' adherence to nursing ethics and the effectiveness of educational interventions in improving ethical decision-making and behavior. **Methods:** A comprehensive literature search was conducted across four databases: PubMed, ScienceDirect, Proquest, and Garuda, covering the period from 2018 to 2023. Five articles meeting the inclusion criteria were selected, including quasi-experimental, qualitative, and cross-sectional studies from Iran, South Korea, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia. **Results:** The findings indicate that ethical education, particularly through scenario-based learning and group discussions, significantly enhances nurses' adherence to ethical codes and patient satisfaction. Challenges in home care practice and various factors influencing ethical behavior in nursing were also identified. Effective supervision and ongoing ethical education were highlighted as critical for maintaining high ethical standards. **Conclusions:** Continuous ethical education and supportive supervision play vital roles in promoting ethical behavior among nurses. These interventions contribute to better adherence to nursing ethical codes and improve overall patient care quality.

Keywords: Nurses' adherence; Nursing ethics; Ethical decision-making; Ethical education; Nursing practice

BACKGROUND

Nurses play a crucial role in the healthcare system and are expected to adhere to high ethical and professional standards (Arslan et al., 2022) However, several global studies indicate that the incidence of ethical violations and unprofessional behavior in nursing practice remains high. According to a study conducted in the United States in 2018, 33% of nurses have committed ethical violations such as lying to patients, neglecting patient needs, or being incompetent in performing care procedures (American Nursing Association, 2018). In the UK, the Medical Protection Society reported a 37% increase in cases of nursing ethics violations between 2017 and 2021, with the most common violations being communication errors with patients and their families (Water, 2021)

National data on nursing ethics violations committed by nurses in Indonesia is still limited. However, research conducted by the Vocational Faculty of Universitas Airlangga Surabaya found several cases of ethical violations, including the neglect of a blistered baby by a nurse, injection errors, and others. This research also found a relationship between Caring behavior and the application of ethical principles among nurses. Another study investigated the compliance of nurses' caring behavior with ethical nursing behavior in hospitals in Indonesia (Ilkafah et al., 2021) Additionally, a legal review of nurses' legal responsibilities for patient safety in independent nursing practice found that 28.3% of patient safety violations were committed by nurses (Sukendar et al., 2021)

The manuscript "Literature Synthesis on Nurses' Adherence to Nursing Ethics" aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing nurses' ethical behavior and decision-making. It includes a review of various publications on nurses' ethical reasoning and behavior, focusing on identifying elements and strategies that facilitate ethical decision-making when facing ethical dilemmas (Snelling, 2023) This research also emphasizes the importance of ethical values in nursing and their influence on nurses' goals, strategies, and actions (Arab et al., 2022) Furthermore, it addresses the need for nurses to have a deep understanding of ethical guidelines and the implications of ethical considerations in their practice.

METHODS

Databases used in the literature search included four main databases: PubMed, ScienceDirect, Proquest, and Garuda, covering publications from 2018 to 2023. The search employed keywords such as "adherence, advance directive" OR "compliance" AND "nursing care" OR "primary nursing" AND "ethics, nursing" OR "nursing ethics." Inclusion criteria for the article search were articles in English and Indonesian, references from the last five years, focusing on literature defining nurses' adherence to nursing ethics, ethical principles, and personal factors influencing nurses' adherence. Exclusion criteria were non-full-text articles, duplicate publications, and literature not discussing nursing ethics.

Keywords used for the PubMed database included "adherence, advance directive[MeSH Terms]" OR "compliance[MeSH Terms]" AND "nursing care[MeSH Terms]" OR "primary nursing[MeSH Terms]" AND "ethics, nursing[MeSH Terms]" OR "nursing ethics[Text Word]," resulting in 2,036 articles. Screening for the last five years yielded 277 articles, with open access and English language criteria narrowing it down to 90 articles, and finally, 1 article met the study criteria For ScienceDirect, the keywords "adherence" OR "compliance" AND "nursing" AND "ethics" resulted in 3,233 articles. Screening for ten years reduced this to 1,290 articles, with open access and English language criteria narrowing it to 60 articles, and 1 article met the study criteria.

In the Proquest database, the keywords "adherence, advance directive" OR "compliance" AND "nursing care" OR "primary nursing" AND "ethics, nursing" OR "nursing ethics" resulted in 4,221 articles. Screening for ten years yielded 1,473 articles, with open access and English language criteria narrowing it to 677 articles, with 3 articles relevant to the study, and finally, 2 articles met the study criteria. For the Garuda database, 118 articles were found, screening for ten years reduced this to 88 articles, and screening top journals resulted in 1 article meeting the study criteria.

Based on the search results, PubMed provided 1 article, ScienceDirect 1 article, Proquest 2 articles, and Garuda 1 article, making a total of 5 articles that met the criteria for this integrative review. A Quality Appraisal of Studies Review was then conducted on each article. The following is the flow chart of the article search in the four databases:

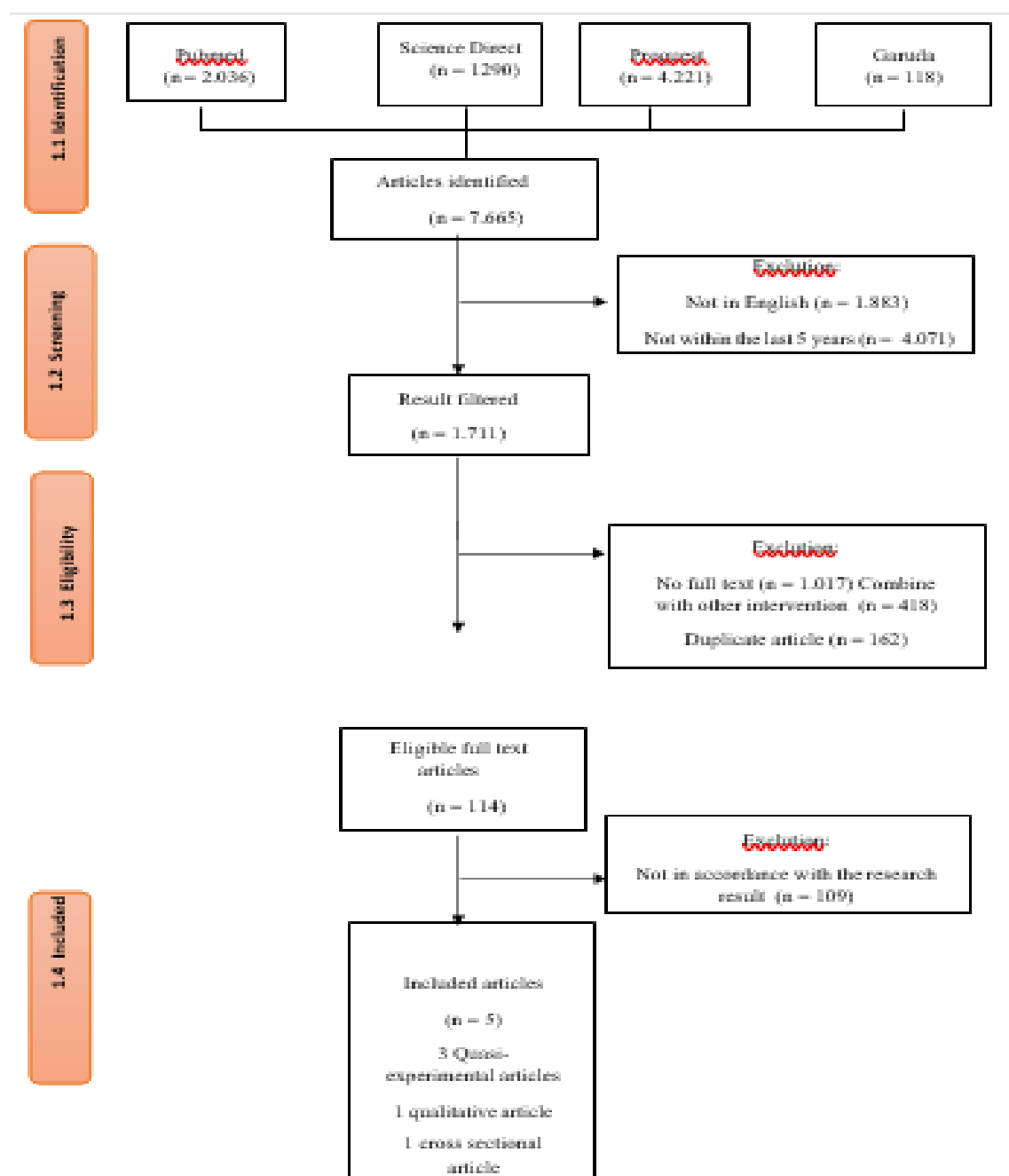


Chart 1. Flow Prisma Chart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Details of the included studies are summarized. Two studies were conducted in Iran, followed by one study each in Ethiopia, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia. Three studies are Quasi-Experimental, and there is one study each of Qualitative Study and Cross-Sectional Study. The studies were conducted between 2018 and 2023. All studies discuss nurses' compliance with nursing ethics. The largest sample size is 422 samples, while the smallest is 20 samples.

Patient satisfaction with the care provided by nurses reflects the quality and effectiveness of the healthcare system. Patient satisfaction is a mental and individual assessment influenced by various factors, including how nurses provide services and respect patients' rights (Izadi et al., 2020) Providing compassionate and ethical care greatly depends on respecting patients' rights. A nurse who does not adhere to ethical principles is likely to face challenges in overcoming professional challenges.

Since 2019, the Korean Nurses Association has required nurses to undergo at least two hours of advanced ethics training as a condition for maintaining their licenses and as a form of compliance with the code of ethics (Lee et al., 2021) Nursing education also emphasizes the importance of recognizing legal aspects and ethical responsibilities as core competencies for nurses (Barnawi, 2023) Therefore, most nursing students in Korea generally take courses such as nursing ethics and bioethics.

Nurses handle various types of care involving high complexity. Through long-term engagement with clients, they face various ethical challenges (Arab et al., 2022) Thus, introducing ethical values and the factors that influence nursing ethics is a crucial element in the practice of the nursing profession (Haile, 2022).

Table 1. Characteristic of selected study

N	Country	Title	Author/Year	Journal	Scenario	Study Methodologi	Type of Study	Study Participant
1	Iran	The Effectiveness of Teaching Nursing Ethics via Scenarios and Group Discussion in Nurse's Adherence to Ethical Codes and Patient's Satisfaction with Nurse's Performance	(Izadi et al., 2020)	Hindawi The Scientific World Journal	Hospital	Quantitative	Quasi Experimental	Nurses 80 and Patients 50
2	Korea Selatan	Effect of Ethics Seminar on Moral Sensitivity and Ethical Behavior of Clinical Nurses	(Lee et al., 2021)	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	Hospital	Quantitative	Quasi Experimental	A total of 35 nurses (17 experimental, 18 control) were recruited.
3	Iran	Nurses' experiences of the ethical values of home care nursing: A qualitative study	(Arab et al., 2022)	International Journal of Nursing Science	Home Care	Qualitative	Induktif Konvensional	20 nurses working at the home care center.
4	Ethiopia	Factors Associated with Nursing Code of Ethics Practice in Gurage Zone, SNNPR, Ethiopia, 2022	(Haile, 2022)	Nursing Research and Reviews Dovepress	Hospital	Quantitative	Cross sectional	The final sample size is 422.

DISCUSSION

This integrative review synthesizes the literature on nurses' compliance with nursing ethics. Evidence from this literature review demonstrates that conducting an in-depth synthesis of the literature on the level of nurses' compliance with nursing ethics principles by collecting, assessing, and unifying findings from various literature sources. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing nurses' compliance with nursing ethics. Additionally, this study aims to identify trends, patterns, and key findings emerging from the related literature and to provide a comprehensive view of issues that can influence ethical compliance in the nursing profession. Thus, the primary goal of this integrative review is to contribute deep and holistic insights related to nurses' compliance with nursing ethics.

First article, this study investigates the effectiveness of teaching nursing ethics through scenarios and group discussions in enhancing nurses' compliance with the code of ethics and patient satisfaction with nurses' performance (Izadi et al., 2020) This study used a quasi-experimental quantitative design and questionnaires to measure nurses' compliance with the code of ethics and patient satisfaction before, immediately after, and one month after the intervention. The results showed that teaching nursing ethics through scenarios and group discussions improved nurses' compliance with the code of ethics and patient satisfaction with nurses' performance. This article also recommends new approaches in teaching nursing ethics principles that can lead to better compliance with the code of ethics and increased patient satisfaction. Additionally, this article includes a list of references related to nursing ethics, moral reasoning, and patient rights in healthcare settings, including topics on ethical challenges in nursing, nurses' knowledge and compliance with the code of ethics, and the impact of nursing ethics education on decision-making.

Second article, this article discusses a study examining the effects of ethics seminars on the moral sensitivity and unethical behavior of clinical nurses (Lee et al., 2021) The results of the study show a reduction in unethical behavior among nurses who attended the seminar, indicating that ethics seminars can reduce the risk of unethical behavior and help nurses become compliant. However, the study also found that moral sensitivity did not significantly increase after attending the seminar. The authors suggest that continuous and repeated ethics training can enhance nurses' moral sensitivity and help them recognize ethical issues in clinical situations. The study also highlights the need for hospital administration departments to provide regular ethics seminars and training to nurses. The authors acknowledge the limitations of this study and propose the need for long-term follow-up studies on the positive effects of ethics seminars. This study involved 35 nurses, with 17 in the experimental group and 18 in the control group. The study found that ethics seminars could reduce the risk of unethical behavior among nurses and showed a negative correlation between moral sensitivity and unethical behavior. The study suggests that ethics seminars and regular training should be provided to nurses as part of their curriculum and practice.

Third article, this article discusses the experiences of nurses in providing home care and their understanding of the ethical values involved (Arab et al., 2022) The study was conducted in Iran and involved 20 nurses working at home care centers. Data were collected through individual interviews and analyzed using content analysis. The findings highlight the ethical challenges faced by nurses, such as patient autonomy, privacy, safety, justice, and cultural competence when providing home care. This article also emphasizes the importance of ethical values in home care and the need for an ethical framework to guide nursing practice in this setting.

Fourth article, this article reports on a study aimed at determining the factors associated with the practice of nursing ethics code among nurses working in hospitals in Gurage Zone, Ethiopia (Haile, 2022) The study results showed that more than half of the nurses practiced the nursing ethics code professionally. Factors associated with the practice of the nursing ethics code include gender, work unit, years of work experience, training, and regular supportive supervision. This article also highlights the importance of regular supportive supervision and current training for staff nurses to enhance the practice of the nursing ethics code. Additionally, the article emphasizes the importance of ethical competence in nursing and the need for nurses to know and comply with the code of ethics in their practice.

Fifth article, this article discusses the importance of developing competencies, behaviors, and communication skills related to respect for head nurses through seminars and educational programs (Barnawi, 2023) The study also highlights the need for strategies to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical nursing. Additionally, this article can be beneficial for nursing instructors, managers, and decision-makers in nursing, as well as providing references to related research articles. The study was conducted in three stages: assessment and planning, implementation, and evaluation. The assessment and planning stage involved obtaining official approval, conducting a pre-test, and creating a schedule and learning environment. The implementation stage included creating an educational program, teaching sessions, and using various teaching methods. The evaluation phase involved collecting data on the direct effects of the program and conducting follow-up to assess its effectiveness. The study found a positive relationship between the head nurse's respect and professional values, as well as the staff nurses' awareness of moral and ethical issues. The results showed an increase in knowledge and perceptions of the respect climate in the workplace among head nurses and staff nurses. The study also emphasizes the ethical considerations and statistical analysis used in the research.

This article examines the consequences of head nurses' compliance with the respect education program on professional nurse ethics and knowledge about moral dilemmas at King Abdulaziz Hospital in Saudi Arabia. The study used a quasi-experimental quantitative research design and involved head nurses and staff nurses as participants.

CONCLUSION

These five articles illustrate the diversity of approaches in understanding and improving nursing ethics. Overall, these articles provide significant contributions to understanding nurses' compliance with nursing ethics, enhancing moral sensitivity, ethical challenges in nursing practice in various contexts, factors influencing the practice of the nursing ethics code, and the development of competencies and respect in the workplace. Each article provides valuable insights that can guide nursing practice towards higher ethical standards and a deeper understanding of ethical values in this profession.

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