

Three Japanese expert nurses 'professional narrative: Reflections on their accumulated clinical nursing experiences refining nursing identity

Hiromi Kuroda ¹⁾, Satomi Yamaguchi ¹⁾, Sayaka Higajima ²⁾, Tomoko Miyashita ³⁾, Hideko Urata ¹⁾

1)Graduate school of biomedical sciences, Nagasaki university,

2)Nursing department of Saga university hospital , 3)Nursing department of Juntendo university Urayasu hospital

The roles of professional nurses have been expanded and became more complicated due to the health care reform and budgetary cut back. Nurses are expected to deal with intricate and multiple tasks in the workplaces more than ever, and thus their time to directly take care of their patients has been limited. With such heavy responsibility and difficulties of managing expected tasks, the young nurses have tended to leave their profession. In this circumstance, the values of expert nurses including their experiences and role as being the role models for young nurses in maintaining quality of care in health care have been increased.

【Purpose】

Reflection on one's own practices and experiences is a significant key for the expert nurses as it constructs intellectual and clinical competencies of nurse and it would refine their professional identity.

The purpose of this study is to describe 3 Japanese expert nurses' perceptions for nursing as their lifework profession.

【Methods】

Participants: Three active expert nurses, who have over 30 years of work experiences, working for a University Medical Hospital with 800 beds in Japan, were the informants of the study. The main role of the informants was day to day patient care rather than the administrative aspect of their work.

Definition of the word; Expert nurse: Based on Benner's (1984), a professional nurse, who has rich experiences of nursing practices and his/her professional knowledge and skills are reached at the expert level, was defined as *Expert nurse* in this study. It is assumed that the *Expert nurse* also has own established idea toward nursing.

Interview: The interview guide (see Table 1.) with some key questions such as ;

Table 1. Interview guide

1. What do you give attention to the most when you interact with the patients?
2. What does the 'nursing' mean to you?
3. What do you wish to tell about nursing and for this to be adopted by the next generation of nurses?
4. What was the motivation for you to become a nurse?
5. Please describe the 'ideal nurse' to you.
6. What do you value the most as being a nurse and in your practice?

It was distributed to the informants a few days before the semi-structured interview. The IC recorder was used and the interview was taken in each interview, and the transcripts were made after the interviews.

Some categories and sub-categories were extracted in inductive manner, and careful analysis was maintained by discussions and triangulation of the research team members.

【Ethical consideration】

This study was undertaken after obtaining ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Nagasaki University, Japan.

【Results】

The three female nurses, who had 30 to 35 years of working experiences as nurse, in their 50's agreed with the study.

Table 2. Interview hour and described 'Nursing' by the participants

| Participants | Interview hour (minutes) | Described 'Nursing' by the participants |
|--------------|--------------------------|--|
| A | 68 | Nursing is as the 'heart' (of caring) |
| B | 35 | Excellent job which allows me to interact with many people and work within people |
| C | 64 | The job that I can dedicate my self to care for the patients, sincerely, naturally , and adequately. |

Twelve categories with 45 sub-categories and 118 codes were extracted from the transcripts.

Table3. Categories of Expert nurses' perceptions for nursing underpinning their professional identity through their experiences

1. Ideal nursing
2. Importance of communication and social skills
3. Nursing as the interpersonal relations with the patients
4. Caring includes family of the patients
5. Supporting patient with team
6. Realizing a true attraction of nursing by the accumulated experiences
7. Increasing the choices/options of appropriate care for the patients by considering their individuality
8. Not only quietly cuddling close to the patients but also providing appropriate care
9. Determining to carry out care for patients' true benefit
10. Accumulations of both personal life and professional life fosters nurses growth
11. Recognition of what is a key to maintain nursing career
12. Considering own role to educate and guide the next generation nurses into nursing

【Discussion】

Professional roles and identity of expert nurses were cultivated within their everyday practices and repetitive reflections of those actions. [*Ideal nursing*] [*Nursing as the interpersonal relations with the patients*] were the principle ideas beyond the age and career of nurses. The Japanese expert nurses perceived that their professional growth was underpinned by [*Accumulations of both personal life and professional life fosters nurses' professional growth*]. With over 30 years of nursing experiences and tuning into in their 50s, these experts refined what and how the nursing professional is like; [*Recognition of what is a key to maintain nursing career*] and [*Realizing a true attraction of nursing by the accumulated experiences*]. This was also influenced by their interactions with patients and others; [*Supporting patients with team*] and [*Caring includes family of the patients*]. Thus, [*Importance of communication and skills*] was determined.

In addition, [*Increasing the choices/options of appropriate care for the patients by considering their individuality*] was perceived. The more expert nurses reflect their own practices the more they would have choices of care to be provided, and to be flexible and creative to provide care of which patients individuality is well considered.

[*Determining to carry out the care for patients' true benefit*] and [*not only quietly cuddling close to the patients but also provide appropriate care*] showed Japanese expert nurses' specific approaches as they believe it fulfilled patients' needs. They accept their patients as they are, but at the same time they provide necessary and beneficial care for their patients with their strong faith as it fosters patients growth. They also perceived themselves as the leaders to lead the next generations as [*Considering their own role to educate and guide the next generation nurses into nursing*] was shown.

Figure1. Accumulation of experiences of nurses and their perception for nursing

