

Introduction

professional behavior can be defined as the appropriateness of an individual's intentional or unintentional actions or reactions in response to changes in the environment, conditions, or situations. This conduct is reflective of qualities associated with their responsibilities, essentially serving as an embodiment of professionalism (Yusoff, 2009).

In the subsequent sections of this text, we will delve into a comprehensive analysis of the literature surrounding professional behavior in higher education, specifically focusing on postgraduate PHSC students. The research methodology, utilizing focus group discussions, will be explained in detail, providing a transparent overview of the chosen approach. Following this, the findings of the study will be presented and discussed, shedding light on the key factors influencing the professional behavior of postgraduate PHSC students. The implications of these findings for academia, practice, and future research will also be explored, aiming to contribute to the ongoing discourse on professional development in higher education.

in the health and social care professions, the concept of 'professionalism' is increasingly scrutinized, with behaviors beyond technical competence coming under the spotlight. Cases heard by regulators often involve issues such as inappropriate or unprofessional behavior, which may not be captured by competency testing alone. These behaviors, ranging from substance abuse to sexual assault, often emerge later in one's career but may have roots in training(HCPC, UK, 2014). Public health professionals are expected to exhibit a higher degree of professionalism in their conduct. The UK's National Health Service(NHS)identifies some of the skills and qualities that public health practitioners should possess, including well-being developed people skills, value difference and diversity, creativity and adaptability, and the ability to analyze and interpret information (NHS).

research consistently reveals that disciplinary actions at the practitioner level are often associated with a combination of factors, including a lack of responsibility, unreliability, insufficient self-awareness, and a diminished capacity for self-improvement. These empirical studies offer strong support for key domains of medical professionalism. (Rogers,and Ballantyne, 2010)

Overview

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Research aim and question

To investigate the factors influencing the professional behavior of postgraduate Public Health and Social Care (PHSC) students in a public university through a focus group discussion.

Question

what factors significantly influence the professional behavior of postgraduate PHSC students in a public university setting?

objectives

1 explore perceptions.

To understand the perceptions of postgraduate PHSC students regarding the key factors that influence their professional behavior within the academic and professional contexts.

2. identify external influences

To identify external factors, including institutional policies, faculty guidance, and industry expectations, that contribute to shaping the professional behavior of postgraduate PHSC students.

3. identify personal and intrinsic factors

To examine the personal and intrinsic factors, such as motivation, ethical considerations, and self-regulation, that play a role in shaping the professional behavior of postgraduate PHSC students.

CHAPTER 2 RESEARCH METHODS

QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUP STUDY

Qualitative methods are primarily designed to attain a comprehensive understanding and depth of insight.

Qualitative research primarily focuses on small cohorts or individual investigations characterized by in-depth exploration. The data collection methods employed in this approach encompass focus group interviews, unstructured or semi-structured in-depth interviews, and observational techniques (Kankam, 2020). thematic analysis (TA) is a way of finding and understanding themes or patterns in qualitative data. What makes TA unique is that it's a method—a tool for analysis—rather than a strict set of rules tied to a specific theory. It gives flexibility to explore and interpret data without being limited to a predefined research framework (Clarke, and Braun 2017).

choosing a sample that accurately reflects the broader population is a crucial aspect of research (Omair, 2014). Sampling methods can be classified as either probability or non-probability methods. (Berndt, 2020). Here, in this study, I have chosen the convenience sampling method.

convenience sampling, a non-probability method commonly employed in qualitative research, frequently involves selecting available clinical cases or participants near a specific location. (Stratton, 2021).

Recruitment, sampling, and study participants

Recruiting postgraduate students for a focus group discussion at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, specifically from the Health and Social Care program. All students were term 2 students. 7 postgraduate students were included in this study , which involves identifying eligible participants, communicating the opportunity, confirming interest, and

conducting the discussion with a focus on collecting valuable insights. The process includes ensuring clarity and handling data confidentially.

Ethical consideration

In qualitative research, ethical considerations take on heightened significance because of the detailed and immersive nature of the study process. The attention to ethical issues becomes more pronounced, especially when conducting face-to-face interviews with groups of participants who are considered vulnerable (Arifin, 2018.)

Ethics, as a branch of philosophy, is concerned with the behavior of individuals and provides guidance on the norms and standards that govern how people interact and relate to each other

Academic freedom

Scholars are anticipated to maintain an open-minded approach and freely exchange information and ideas without apprehension or coercion, all while recognizing the importance of safeguarding intellectual property.

anonymity means keeping things confidential by not revealing the ethnic or cultural background of participants. It involves not using their names or sharing any other private details about them.

This represents a key ethical concern in research, signifying that an individual willingly, knowingly, and provides consent voluntarily and intelligently. Akaranga, S.I. and Makau, B.K., 2016

I used special codes to protect people's identities, and only authorized individuals can access the important database. (Clarke et al, 2001)

Participants received information about the research's purpose, design, and the intended strategy for sharing findings. They were reassured about the privacy measures in place for collecting, storing, and managing data. The assurance was given that only the researcher and the research supervisor would have access to the audiotapes. Participants were guaranteed that, although the data would be stored in computer files with password protection until the study's conclusion, it would be securely destroyed at the end of the research

Verbal informed consent was sought from each study participant prior to the commencement of the interviews. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and strict measures were implemented to ensure the confidentiality of participant data. This commitment to voluntary participation and confidentiality underscores the ethical considerations and safeguards implemented throughout the research process

Data collection methods/materials

Interviews

Interviews are a qualitative data collection method involving direct communication between the researcher and participants. This can be done individually (one-on-one) or in a group setting. (Peters, and Halcomb, 2015.)

The data collection for this study employed interviews, with responses recorded through the use of smartphone voice recorders. The interviews followed a fully structured format, with a designated student acting as the chairperson, posing questions, and facilitating the discussion, while other students provided their answers. The entire interview session lasted for 49 minutes. The setting for the interviews was a quiet room allocated in the university's Salisbury building, ensuring a conducive environment for thoughtful and focused discussions. This methodological approach allows for a systematic and comprehensive exploration of the research topic, capturing the perspectives of participants in a controlled and organized manner.

Following the interview sessions, the recorded responses were diligently transcribed and compiled into a single Word document. To ensure the confidentiality and security of the gathered data, this document has been safeguarded with a password and stored on my laptop. This precautionary measure aims to maintain the privacy and integrity of the participants' input, reflecting a commitment to ethical research practices and responsible data handling.

to uphold confidentiality and anonymize participant identities, each individual involved in the study was assigned a unique code, such as "Participant 1," instead of using their actual names. This coding system serves as an additional layer of protection, ensuring that the responses and insights shared during the interviews remain anonymous and detached from personal identifiers. This practice aligns with ethical considerations, prioritizing participant privacy and contributing to the overall integrity of the research process.

the collected data, including the transcribed interviews with participants using assigned codes, will be permanently deleted in February. This meticulous approach to data management aligns with ethical standards and ensures the complete removal of any sensitive information from the researcher's records, thereby respecting participant confidentiality and privacy. This commitment to data deletion reflects a responsible and secure handling of research information.

Data analysis technique

The chosen method for analyzing the collected data is thematic analysis. This approach involves a systematic examination of the qualitative data to identify and interpret recurring patterns or themes. In the context of this research, the transcribed interviews will be carefully reviewed, and key themes relevant to the research objectives will be identified. These themes will be coded and organized to unveil meaningful insights and patterns within the participants' responses. Thematic analysis provides a flexible yet rigorous framework for extracting rich, nuanced information, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the data collected through interviews. (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018.)

For data analysis, the primary tools and materials utilized included audio recordings and detailed notes. The interviews were recorded using a smartphone's voice recorder application, capturing participants' responses in their own words. These audio recordings serve as valuable resources for transcribing and thoroughly understanding the nuances of the participants' perspective

simultaneously, meticulous notes were taken during the transcription period to document key points. These notes supplement the audio recordings, providing additional insights and aiding in the thematic analysis process.

results

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/reports/professionalism-in-healthcare-professionals.pdf>

[Skills and interests \(public health practitioner\) | Health Careers](#)

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