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Nursing students' perspectives on social media e-professionalism in undergraduate nursing programs

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Social media platforms and functions have multiplied and the technology has woven tighter into daily life. Nursing faculty have been tasked with addressing social media e-professionalism by conceiving programs and writing policies that educate nursing students and hold the students accountable should breaches in e-professionalism occur. Despite the need for education addressing social media e-professionalism in health science education, few studies addressed the perceptions of health science students utilizing social media and even fewer addressed pre-licensure nursing students' perceptions. The conceptual frameworks utilized for the study was Knowles' theory of adult learning, Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation, and Bandura's social learning theory. A basic qualitative was utilized to gain nursing student insight on social media e-professionalism in undergraduate nursing programs. Data were collected through individual, semi structured phone interviews conducted with seven associates degree nursing students who were asked to describe their perceptions of social media e-professionalism. Six themes emerged from the data, answering the research question: (1) uses for social media, (2) defining e-professionalism, (3) negative behaviors, (4) consequences of negative behaviors, (5) privacy, and (6) public perceptions. Based on these findings, the study provided a small foundation for nurse educators to gain a clearer understanding of the perspectives of nursing students on social media e-professionalism. The findings may aid educators in the critical analysis of current policies guiding the use of social media by their students, as well as facilitate the evaluation of any existing programs aimed at educating nursing students on social media e-professionalism. Recommendations for future research included further examining the perspectives of nursing students on social media e-professionalism, as well as directly observing students' profiles, postings, and habits.

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