Professionalism in nursing: a concept analysis
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Context
The level of professionalism in nursing appears to be deteriorating, negatively impacting on professional socialisation of nursing students and the quality of health service delivery. The concept professionalism is poorly defined; lack of understanding what it entails may influence the education of nurses and the assessment of professional socialisation of nursing students.

Aim
This paper aims to define professionalism within the nursing profession through the concept analysis process, to construct a connotative (theoretical) definition.

Methodology
The concept professionalism underwent in-depth analysis using Walker & Avant’s (2011) 8 steps concept analysis method. Qualitative content analysis highlighted key attributes. Thematic analysis reduced data into categories of similar attributes. Quantitative content analysis classified data in terms of frequency, identifying meanings most often associated with the concept. Concluding statements formulated, provided deeper understanding of the concept. A connotative definition was created; the meaning was further refined by constructing model, contrary and borderline cases.

Results
The findings reveal a plethora of definitions on professionalism with overlapping defining attributes. When recognised attributes of professionalism were grouped, professionalism could be defined within the nursing context. The findings provide the opportunity for further research, education and recommendations for nursing practice.

Recommendations
The resultant defining attributes will enhance nurses understanding of the meaning of professionalism. Nurses will be empowered to integrate attributes into daily practice to create uniformity in professional values, knowledge and behaviour.

Defining attributes are guidelines for nurses to utilise and assess professional practice, aiming
to improve service delivery and uplift the nursing professions image.

Stakeholders: SANC, nursing unions and nurse managers should be involved in hosting workplace workshops on professionalism. All categories of nurses to attempt reacquainting themselves with the defining attributes of professionalism to help reaffirm their professional behaviour.

Reinforcement of defining attributes of professionalism must be highlighted at every opportunity during ward, management meetings, workshops and formal social events. Posters denoting attributes of professionalism should be displayed in the workplace.

Developing incentive programmes to reward nurses for consistent demonstration of professionalism; a motivation to strive to become better professionals. Nurse support programmes addressing challenges, negatively impacting on professionalism, and measures to overcome these issues must be initiated.