EXPLORING REFLECTIVE JOURNAL WRITING AMONG
PRE-REGISTERED STUDENT NURSES

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION
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ABSTRACT

This study furnishes a comprehensive exploration of reflective journal writing in diploma nursing education of pre-registered student nurses (PRSN) in a Malaysian context. The focal point is directed toward the practice of reflective journal writing and the roles it plays in developing professional knowledge and skills among novice student nurses. Within this domain, this study explored the participants' perceptions on reflective journal writing, investigated their evaluation of reflective journaling and looked into their levels of reflection demonstrated in their reflective journals as documented in *Transformative Learning Theory* (TLT) proposed by Mezirow (1990). For these purposes, dual methodologies were adopted to answer the research questions. Initially, the quantitative descriptive method was implemented for data collection and analysis utilizing a structured survey questionnaire to thirty PRSN to explore their perceptions on reflective journaling. In order to contribute more scientific results, I*mportance-Performance Analysis Matrix* (IPA) proposed by Martilla and James (1977) was employed; the results showed that the participants required more comprehensive orientation about the importance of reflective journaling in nursing education. Furthermore, the qualitative case study was conducted to explore the levels of reflection revealed in the reflective journals and the verbatim of focused and one-to-one interviews. These documents were analyzed deductively and inductively utilizing the concepts of three levels of reflection from the heart of TLT. Based on the findings, the study discussed that almost all participants were positive about reflective journaling in the process of learning. They also acknowledged reflective journaling could enhance their learning at micro level, the self-directed learning as the main capital of reflective journaling, increase their ability at meso and macro levels, the ability to appreciate collaborative learning and

communication with more knowledgeable ones in and out of clinical posting. Moreover, through the lens of TLT, the results showed that from the time the student nurses get involved with nursing practice, and start to practice in authentic situation, they demonstrate their ability of reflection in three levels of content (*what*), process (*how*), and premise (*why*) not in a linear but in cyclical fashion which they are overlapping as well. This study concluded that grouping the student nurses as non-reflector, reflector, or critical reflector seems inadequate since they were involved in reflection of any forms from the initial stage of working in the practicum. Based on the findings, this can be discussed as the theoretical implication to the body of knowledge. The findings have significant implications for nursing education. That is, prominently incorporated reflective journal writing into the nursing curriculum can be considered as a strategy to improve nursing students' experiential and practical knowledge that assists them in the journey of becoming professional. Being critical and having the ability to reflect at higher order of thinking is a valuable asset that can allow learners to salvage learning that stay with them all through their lives. However, being critical is not a common practice in Malaysian culture. Thus, the future research could accommodate culture-fraught nature of critical thinking in reflective journaling a leading approach in pedagogy.

PENEROKAAN PENULISAN JURNAL REFLEKTIF DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR KEJURARAWATAN PRA-BERDAFTAR

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini melengkapkan suatu penerokaan yang komprehensif terhadap penulisan jurnal reflektif dalam pendidikan diploma kejururawatan bagi pelajar kejururawatan pra berdaftar (PKPB) dalam konteks Malaysia. Titik fokus kajian bertumpu kepada amalan penulisan jurnal reflektif dan peranannya dalam meningkatkan pengetahuan profesional dan kemahiran dalam kalangan pelajar kejururawatan novis. Di bawah domain tersebut, kajian ini meneroka persepsi para peserta terhadap penulisan jurnal reflektif, mengkaji penilaian mereka terhadap penjurnalan reflektif dan melihat tahap refleksi mereka yang ditonjolkan dalam jurnal reflektif mereka seperti yang didokumentasi dalam *Transformative Learning Theory* (TLT) oleh Mezirow (1990). Untuk tujuan tersebut, metodologi dual telah digunakan untuk menjawab persoalan kajian. Pada mulanya, kaedah kuantitatif berbentuk deskriptif telah diaplikasikan untuk kutipan dan analisis data menggunakan borang soal selidik tinjauan berstruktur kepada 30 PKPB untuk meneroka persepsi mereka terhadap penjurnalan reflektif. Bagi menyumbang kepada lebih banyak hasil saintifik, *Importance-Performance Analysis Matrix* (IPA) yang diperkenalkan oleh Martilla dan James (1977) telah digunakan; hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa para peserta memerlukan lebih orientasi komprehensif mengenai kepentingan penjurnalan reflektif dalam pendidikan kejururawatan. Selain itu, kajian kes kualitatif telah dijalankan untuk meneroka tahap refleksi yang ditonjolkan dalam jurnal-jurnal refleksi dan laporan kata demi kata (*verbatim*) bagi temu bual berfokus dan satu ke satu (*one-to-one*). Dokumen-dokumen ini telah dianalisis secara deduktif dan induktif melalui penggunaan konsep tiga tahap refleksi berasaskan tunjang utama TLT. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian, kajian membincangkan bahawa kesemua peserta positif terhadap

penjurnalan reflektif dalam proses pembelajaran. Mereka juga mengakui bahawa penjurnalan reflektif mampu meningkatkan pembelajaran mereka pada tahap mikro, pembelajaran kendiri sebagai pusat utama penjurnalan reflektif, meningkatkan kemampuan mereka pada tahap meso dan makro, kemampuan untuk menghargai pembelajaran kolaboratif dan berkomunikasi dengan yang lebih berpengetahuan di dalam dan luar penempatan klinikal. Seterusnya, melalui lensa TLT, hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa bermula waktu pelajar kejururawatan terlibat dengan amalan kejururawatan, dan memulakan amalan dalam situasi autentik, mereka menonjolkan kebolehan refleksi mereka dalam tiga tahap kandungan (*what),* proses (*how*), dan premis (*why*) bukan dalam keadaan linear namun dalam keadaan berkitar di mana berlakunya pertindihan (*overlapping*). Kajian ini menyimpulkan pengelompokan pelajar kejururawatan sebagai bukan reflektor, reflektor atau reflektor kritikal dilihat tidak mencukupi atas sebab penglibatan mereka dalam refleksi pelbagai bentuk bermula peringkat awal mereka berpraktikum. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian, hal ini dibincangkan sebagai implikasi bersifat teori kepada isi pengetahuan. Hasil kajian mempunyai implikasi penting kepada pendidikan kejururawatan. Hal ini menerapkan penulisan jurnal reflektif ke dalam kurikulum kejururawatan yang dilihat sebagai suatu strategi untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan praktikal dan pengalaman pelajar kejururawatan yang membantu perjalanan profesional mereka. Berfikiran kritis dan berkemampuan untuk membuat refleksi pada aras pemikiran yang tinggi merupakan aset berharga yang membolehkan pelajar untuk memastikan pembelajaran seumur hidup. Walau bagaimanapun, pemikiran kritis bukanlah suatu kebiasaan dalam budaya Malaysia. Oleh itu, kajian akan datang boleh mengetengahkan pemikiran kritis sarat budaya dalam penjurnalan reflektif sebagai pendekatan terkemuka dalam pedagogi.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Focus Group Interview .... FGI

Importance-Performance Analysis .... IPA

Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education .... MOHE

Nurse Tutors .... NT

Pre-Registered Student Nurses .... PRSN

Reflective Journal Writing .... RJW

Reflective Journals .... RJ

Transformative Learning Theory .... TLT

Transformative Learning .... TL

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The prospect of Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (2010) indicates that the core competency of nursing is critical thinking and the ability to apply their knowledge into practice. That is, critical thinking requires not only having cognitive skills, but also being able to ask questions, and think clearly about issues (Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Mann, Gordon, & MacLeod, 2009). In other words, nurses are required to have a sound knowledge base to practice and to apply the core critical thinking skills such as interpretation, analysis, inferences, evaluation, explanation, and self-regulation (MOHE, 2010, p.9). Regarding the requirement from MOHE, the nursing practice aims to educate competent, responsible, and self-directed nursing professionals (Bjerkvik & Hilli, 2019). Besides, student nurses are required to accomplish a significant amount of formal education to able to evaluate and assess new nursing techniques and information and have the confidence to try new procedures (Allan & Discroll, 2014). Thus, to achieve these aims, student nurses who are in direct patient care should be encouraged to use reflective journaling as a well-established tool for reflective learning.

Reflective journaling has the reputation of promoting reflective learning through which nurses can be equipped with the ability to apply academic knowledge into practice; and this ability in the literature is known as the ability to reflect (Schon, 1984). Having this ability, the student nurses can make a sound clinical judgment, effective decisions, and have a critical mind to solve problems (Mann, et al. 2009;

Mezirow, 1991; McAllister, 2012). Therefore, student nurses develop self-awareness to bridge the gap between the theory and practice, evaluate the workplace challenges in their profession, and recognize the significance of reflective practice in the process of self-directed learning (Chirema, 2007; Schon, 1984; Tarrant, 2013; Allan & Discroll, 2014).

Reflection and reflective practices have been known to be indispensable characteristics that one should possess as Tarrant (2013) called it 'a competent professional'. Tarrant (2013, p. 2) stated that "through reflecting on our practice, we become more aware, more in control, more able to see our strengths and development needs. Through reflection, we can begin to move from novice to expert." This is because reflective practices provide opportunities for novice learners to incorporate theory into practice to foster acting and thinking professionally, and get involved in the process of self-awareness and self-development (Mann, Gordon, and MacLeod, 2009). Thereby, reflective practices are being integrated into all educational levels as a part of students' learning process throughout their study.

The concept of reflection was first introduced by Dewey (1933) as an alternative approach to education dominated by the technical orientation of acquiring and mastering skills. Under the influence of Aristotle and Confucius, Dewey considered reflection to be a special form of problem-solving of an issue which involved active involvement of ideas linking one to its predecessors. Reflection or reflective practice, according to Dewey, is any persistent contemplation, and any active thought regarding any beliefs, knowledge, value, and experience pertaining to any situation or condition. His idea highlighted reflection as having good habits of higher order of thinking as the goal of formal education. Reflection or reflective

practices have been part of the learning process in different fields of professional studies.

The relationship of reflection and reflective practices and their advantages among the learners has been widely discussed in the literature related to these two variables. It is believed that through reflection learners take active responsibility for their own learning. In this regard, Allan and Driscoll (2014) argue that by integrating reflection and reflective practices into existing coursework, learners can improve their learning through connecting and analyzing an event, experience, or thought; creating a bridge between their thoughts and actions. They reiterate that reflection is a powerful ability that allows learners to make connections to prior, present and future learning situations. Similarly, the result of a study conducted by Mahlanze and Sibiya (2017) revealed that student nurses supported the use of reflective practices in the process of professional development and clinical learning. Participants in the study confirm that these reflective activities improved their ability in making proactive decisions, taking educative actions as well as being actively involved in their own learning.

To reiterate this point, reference could be made to a study done by Paterson and Chapman (2013). In a study with physiotherapists, they acknowledged that reflection is important for the educational tradition of self-cultivation. They provided evidence that reflective practices are part of continuing professional education that encourages a deeper level of understanding. Likewise, Kim (2013) presents the challenging issues in facilitating postgraduate tourism learners' responsibility for their critical insights into tourism subject matter and for the development of reflective thinking skills. In another study in Malaysia by Shazaitul Azreen Rodzalan and Maisarah Mohamed Saat (2015), the role of gender and academic disciplines on

the students' perception on their ability of critical thinking and problem-solving skill was sought. They included three academic disciplines of science, engineering and social science in their study. The finding of this study emphasizes the implementation of critical thinking and problem-solving can assist the students in better understanding and reflection on what they have learned in the classroom.

Even in nursing, many scholars have identified reflection and reflective practices as fundamental traits of competent health care professionals (Argyris and Schon 1974; Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D., 1985; Moon, 1999; Schon, 1983, 1987; Mann, et al., 2009). Some researchers believe that a competent health care professional is one who is prepared to face challenges and that reflection and reflective practices prepares them for this endeavour (Schon 1983, 1987; Argyris & Schon 1974; Moon 1999; Boud et al. 1985). To explain further, Boud (1995) states that healthcare professionals, novice nurses as well as student nurses are among those who need to reflect, to act and to think professionally throughout the course of their study and practice.

Writing is known as a socio-cultural approach rather than a psycho-cognitive discourse function as a meaning-making process in a variety of educational settings and professional contexts. According to constructivist, if we wish to have a student-centred environment, the comprehension and retention of information as well as reflections on ideas and conceptions can be done through writing (Boldrini & Cattaneo, 2014). They believe that writing to learn approach is a powerful learning tool that allows thoughts and experiences to be re-examined in a way of thinking objectively, making a connection between thoughts, and monitoring the trace of the learning process. Thus, reflective writing has been valued as an educational tool for nurses in providing opportunities in reflective practices that could be beneficial in

promoting professional skills and lifelong learning (Chapman, Dempsey, & Warren-Forward, 2009; Jasper, 1999; Kear, 2013; Mezirow, 2000).

When dealing with learning, studies have proven that the use of reflection and reflective practices are important in promoting deeper learning (Chapman et al., 2009; Chong, 2009; Plack, Driscoll, Blissett, McKenna, and Plack, 2007), in reducing learners' anxiety (Davies, 1995), in increasing learners' self-awareness (Padden, 2011), in improving learners' thinking process on the clinical experience (Milinkovic and Field, 2005) and in facilitating autonomy among learners (Mezirow, 1981). Numerous studies on reflective practices have concentrated on activities other than reflective journal writing. In one of the phases in the study conducted by Belton, Gould, and Scott (2006), the students were required to read and reflect on dissertations. In her study, Whitmire (2004) investigated undergraduates' reflective judgment using digital environments. Whereas in her study conducted in 2013, Kear used narrative analysis methodology with nursing students to describe their experience in learning during their nursing education. These studies had proven the role of reflective practices in the process of enhanced learning among their participants. However, reflective practice in this study refers mainly to reflective journal entries written by pre-registered student nurses upon their clinical experience on a life event they had experienced in their clinical posting.

In this framework, Reflective Journal Writing (RJW) has been considered as an effective instrument in the process of reflective ability development in education. This reflective ability can be perceived as a collection of descriptions and reflections on real-life experiences. Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) pointed out that RJW in a form of reporting professional situations of the workplace substantiates the connection between different places of learning and experience. In this regard, Moon

(1999) maintained that RJW as a form of intervention can encourage reflection and promote deep learning. Therefore, writing about work-place experience in a form of RJW has been proven to be a positive approach to developing reflective capabilities and developing deep learning. That is, reflection skills is in the heart of functioning safe and providing a high quality of nursing care along with reducing the risk of error and promoting health care.

Reflective journal writing is a most useful tool for student nurses to critically analyze and integrate experience with classroom learning (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985; Jasper, 1999; Mezirow, 2000; Schon, 1984). As a powerful learning tool, reflective writing could help the student nurses to recognize their levels of knowledge and learning needs (Chapman et al., 2009; Jasper, 1999; Plack and Greenberg, 2005), promote their critical thinking (Boud et al., 1985; Schon, 1984), and consciously review their experience (Chirema, 2007).

In her study about the use of reflective journals with the post-registered nurses, Chirema (2007) indicated that reflective journal writing provides a chance for the learners to evaluate their professional development and to recognize their emotions explicitly in the process of learning. Similarly, in the study conducted by (Milinkovic and Fields, 2005; Chapman et al, 2009), they argued that reflection as a highly cognitive ability can assist learners to function as a better learner in their workplace. In addition to that, they further emphasized on reflective journal writing as an educational tool that increases deep learning required for professional development.

Thus, reflection provides meaning to student nurses' experience and encourages them to think about the problems, evaluate the situation from a different

angle, and helps them to analyze the condition to select the best intervention. In fact, research indicated that in the student-centred approach of teaching and learning strategy, the practice of reflection can make the learners actively involve with, rather than passively receive the content knowledge (Mezirow, 1991). For instance, it is a natural procedure that novice student nurses would face challenges during a clinical posting in a hospital environment.

In relation to this, Mann et al, (2009) stated that unless these novice student nurses get familiarity with reflective practice in their field, their unfamiliarity will lead them to experience confusion in practicum. Therefore, the ability to reflect and integrate classroom theories with actual real-life practice can be valuable in their learning. Consequently, it can be indicated that the sense of disorientation could be beneficial for novice student nurses; that is, they seek help from other more knowledgeable person or from their mistakes to solve their problems. As Schon (1983) recapped that reflection "the application of scientific theory and technique can be an instrument in problem-solving."

Unlike Mackintosh (1998), who challenges reflective practices for the nursing profession, the findings with the studies conducted by Borglin (2011) and by Taylor-Haslip (2010) with nursing students, by Lyons (1995) with midwifery, and by Azer (2008) with medical students demonstrate the significant role of reflective journal writing. These studies indicate the role of reflection and reflective journal writing in promoting critical thinking that can lead to the academic success of the learners. Although Plack and Greenberg (2005) find out that reflection is the right path to achieve excellence in the practice among paediatricians, Duffy (2010) points out that the learners need guidance from their preceptors to improve their ability to reflection.

Subsequent to the publication of studies signifying the important role of reflection and reflective practices, many educational settings have enforced the evidence of reflective writing as formal requirements for practitioners, educators, and curriculum designers. In this regard, Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education has also reiterated that reflective practice is a formal requirement and it is a part of the licensing and revalidation process (MOHE, 2010).

According to MOHE, it is greatly emphasized that the core curriculum should focus on "critical thinking and the ability to use knowledge" to practice and provide holistic care. With the appropriate amount of medical and nursing science, liberal arts, and research, the implementation of this curriculum must integrate "good" habit of the mind in critical thinking and problem-solving, with caring and compassion. With this curriculum, the prospect is that those future nurses at the level of Diploma Programme must meet these requirements: application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and the production of safe and competent nurses (MOHE, 2010).

Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education reiterates that critical thinking and integrating tacit knowledge into practice are the qualifications for nurses, which is manifested in their practice as competent nurses (MOHE, 2010). As a knowledge-based profession, nurses exercise critical thinking in order to collect information, interpret them, make an effective judgment, and sound decision that is crucial to the patient's well-being or even their survival. The ability of critical thinking enables the nurses to coordinate with multidisciplinary professionals in the healthcare system and perform as coordinator of care.

In this study, according to the head of the Diploma School of Nursing, reflective practice, and reflective activities are among major practices that were integrated into a three-year program, since 2003. Having reflective writing integrated into the curriculum with a major focus on the practice, pre-registered student nurses (PRSN) are involved with writing reflective journals based on Gibbs' (1988) model once a week or every other week upon tutors' requirements. Since no specific time was allocated for reflective writing during clinical practice, the PRSN would write it after working hours. Every semester, student nurses' clinical performances are assessed through reflective practices (Chong, 2009). This assessment has revealed that the pre-registered student nurses (PRSN) are not competent in the reflective journal writing practices.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The review has clearly identified the significant role of reflection and reflective journal writing in helping professionals especially in health care communities to be competent in their work. In an overview of this study, a three-year nursing program encourages student nurses to attend writing reflective journals after their clinical practices for many years now. However, the majority of PRSN did not do well in reflective practice to date (Chong, 2009) and not much has been done to seek the rationale for this deficiency. With the above discussions, in response to Chong (2009) in seeking the rationale for deficiency in being reflective, additional exploratory research in this area and in a similar context seemed adequate. That is an attempt to determine the levels of reflection through analysis of RJW to enlighten the facts of understanding the real value of reflection and reflective journal writing among pre-registered student Nurses in a Malaysian context.

Reflection and reflective journal writing has been emphasized in the literature of nursing education and can be considered as a pre-requisite for professional practice in nursing (Chapman, et al., 2009; Chirema, 2007; Coward, 2011; Jasper, 1999; Mezirow, 1991). Although reflection can improve learning, there is a lack of clarity in terms of operationalizing the concepts of reflection (Thorpe, 2004; Coward, 2011; Boud & Walker, 1998). According to experiential education, the concepts of micro (interpersonal), meso (intrapersonal), and macro (socio-political level) of real-life experience has revealed that reflection is student actual involvement with the subject matter at hand. Furthermore, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education had reiterated that reflective practice to be a formal requirement and part of the licensing and revalidation process (MOHE, 2010), the indication to support and enlighten these curricular activities and innovations remain basically theoretical.

1.3 Research Objectives

Reflective journal writing has earned the reputation of being an educational tool. This praise has emerged due to the nature of reflective journal writing that enhances the students' self-learning through deep and critical thinking in workplace arena and making meaning from the experience. Hence, based on the above discussion, the following objectives are formulated:

•   To describe the Malaysian Pre-Registered Student Nurses' perception on reflective journal writing

•   To inspect the role of reflective journal writing in Malaysian Pre-Registered Student Nurses' professional knowledge

•   To explore the reflective journals written during a clinical posting to determine levels of reflection among Malaysian Pre-Registered Student Nurses using the model based on the work of Mezirow (1990, 1991) and adapted by Chirema (2007)

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the research objectives, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the perception of Malaysian Pre-Registered Student Nurses of reflective journal writing?

2. How do Malaysian Pre-Registered Student Nurses evaluate the effectiveness of reflective journal writing in developing their professional knowledge and skills?

3. What levels of reflection do Malaysian Pre-Registered Student Nurses reveal in their reflective journal writing entries?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The reasons why this study decided to explore the reflective journal writing among Malaysian pre-registered student nurses is to reveal the following ideas from different perspectives.

From the pedagogical point of view, the result of the study may suggest pre-registered student nurses to use reflective journal writing more frequently as a learning tool and practice reflection in a more regular manner. Consequently,

reflection can direct the learners toward being more self-directed, independent and competent nurses for their profound understanding toward deep lifelong learning.

Moreover, this study also enlightens the levels of reflection as well as the extent of reflection which is left unnoticed in reflective journaling among the participants. They admitted that the purpose of reflection is to promote learning and improve their professional activities.

The learners may require validation on their clinical practice and enhancement of their judgment. They are in hope to use reflective journals to communicate with their nurse mentors to receive feedback on their clinical practice. Therefore, reflective journals can be one source of evidence for encouragement.

With limited empirical studies about student nurses' perception of writing reflective journals, this study will examine this reflective practice for the learning purpose of reflection and reflective practices.

The result of the interview sessions reveals that what Malaysian PRSN actually reflect on/in while engaging in RJW. Moreover, they expressed their ideas on the effectiveness of reflective journal writing in the development of their knowledge and skills. In the same vein, this study had an attempt to bring into light the relationship of importance-performance of reflective journaling among participants. This idea was implemented by exploring participants' views and understandings on the importance of reflective journaling on one hand and on the other hand their insights and awareness on their preparation to produce acceptable journals.

This study could provide further knowledge that could be useful in RJW practice, which has not been identified before.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Facing any limitation is a natural phenomenon of every research and this research is no exception. The focal point of this study concerns the reflective journal writing among the Malaysian pre-registered student nurses. One great limitation referred to the participants' mother language. For most of them, writing reflective journals in English was stressful and thus an immense source of concern. Therefore, expressing their feeling, understanding and thoughts in manuscripts, in the formal written forms and in English could ignite some negative attitude towards the journaling that would cause certain limitation throughout the course of research. To tackle this undesired condition, ample time was thus given to the participants to try to alleviate their anxiety and focus on the task at hand.

According to the nursing curriculum, these student nurses would seat for the exam on the reflective journal in the second semester of the second year of their three-year nursing program. Another limitation is the nature of reflective journal entries for this study. Participants provided four to eight journals for this study upon a request by the researcher. They were fully informed that their journals would be used for the study and they would not be assessed by their journals.

Another concern referred directly to the researcher herself. She was considered a foreigner which aggravates the participants' sense of shyness that inhibited them to communicate freely. Regarding this limitation, the researcher expressed her understanding and assured to lower this anxiety and nervousness in participants. For one thing, anytime the researcher wanted to visit the participants, she was accompanied by a highly educated Malaysian lady. Moreover, the experience of living in this country for a considerable period of time helped her to easily adapt to

the local culture that facilitated the process of blending well with the locals that made the participants feel at ease and less inhibited.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

Some factors had not been taken into considerations in reflective journal writing among the pre-registered student nurses in this study; such as the role of gender, race, culture, participants' mother language and the informal conditions of learning such as a library, student hostel or food canteen. However, these factors could be significant for future studies in the flourishing of reflective journal writing field if the environment and culture are valued in the teaching and learning strategy of reflection and reflective writing.

1.8 Definitions of the Key Terms

Content reflection: When the learners detect a situation, explain, and portray the problem in a descriptive fashion, they are only using their knowledge to reflect at the content level (Mezirow, 1990, 1991).

Clinical setting: It refers to the place of practice of the prior knowledge or theory received in the classroom for most medical-related fields such as nursing. In this study, clinical setting is the arena that the participants would experience the real condition of patients and actual activities regarding their physical examinations and treatments. It also refers to hospital posting.

Critical reflection: It refers to the developmental process of the level of reflection among the learners. The ability of being critically reflective assists the learners to recognize, analyse, and rationalize the values, beliefs, and assumptions of others and themselves (Mezirow, 1990, 1991). The learners with this ability can possess a

higher level of thinking with which they can reach the higher level of professional growth and achieve knowledge in the process of lifelong learning.

Experience: The knowledge and skill that one has gained by doing throughout the time; or something that happened to one that influences the way one thinks and behaves (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2004). In this study, experience refers to the knowledge where the learners can demonstrate their competence in using their prior knowledge obtained through observation or training-practice of actual tasks.

Experiential Education: An educational approach that emphasizes an active participation of real-life experience. The emphasis is placed on the specific nature of the student's experience and the various rational of the student's involvement in relation to their attitudes, developments, and cognitions (Dewey, 1938).

Lifelong learning: It refers to the nature of learning that learners acquire during the course of their education. This type of learning would initiate from the deep and conscious thinking that remains on the life of the person forever, would it not be easily forgotten, it could prepare a medium for the individual learner to be an independent person, in other words, to realize Emancipatory Learning (Freire, 1970).

Macro-Level: Refers to socio-political and environmental the perspective of [reflection] that is more global in the aspects of existence (Myers, 1993).

Meaning-making: It refers to the ability of sense-making and interpreting of the prior experience and knowledge obtained from the classroom or the workplace. This ability would assist the learner to make decisions for further action.

Meso-Level: Refers to the interpersonal level of an individual's experience, knowledge, and functioning that put into practice. Also, it includes behavioural aspects of interpersonal behaviour of two or more members of a group in or during a social interaction within a larger population (Myers, 1993).

Micro-Level: Refers to an individual's experience, knowledge, and functioning in relation to the psychological or intrapersonal level (Myers, 1993).

Practicum: It refers to any college course in a specialized field of study that gives students practical application of prior classroom studied theory. In this study, the word practice and practicum has been used interchangeably.

Perception: It refers to how pre-registered student nurses view the value of reflective writing experience in the process of their development in their professional practice.

Premise reflection: It refers to when the learners concern about the problem itself as well as the reason behind it. At this level of reflection, the learners are more critical toward the current situation related to their study and practice (Mezirow, 1990, 1991).

Process reflection: It refers to when the learners are concerning the strategies in the process of solving a problem, or making decisions on how to take effective actions, they are experiencing this level of reflection (Mezirow, 1990, 1991).

Professional skills: It refers to the person's highest level of knowledge and experiences pertaining to the field of education. In this study, professional skills are potentially a process that refers to a person's ultimate level of achievement that causes independence that somehow is emancipating.

Reflection: It refers to any persistent contemplation, and any active thought regarding any beliefs, knowledge, value and experience pertaining to any situation or condition (Dewey, 1933). In this study, reflection refers to the participants' contemplating thought prior, during or after a real-life incident, event, or experience after their clinical practice.

Reflective journal writing: It is a type of an academic genre of writing activity, which contains the elements of reflection upon an incident, an experience or a real-life event. For the participants of this study, RJW is a part of nursing curriculum that is compulsory for student nurses to do as part of the Fundamentals of Nursing II. For 10% of the mark for this course, student nurses sit for the exam on reflective journal writing. In this study, reflective journal writing refers to pieces of writing that contain focal participants' reflection upon their practices during clinical posting.

1.9 Preface to the Following Chapters

The goal to have this section is to provide the basic information needed to understand the seven-part structure of this thesis. Each part refers to each chapter and the following section introduces different parts of this thesis for easy reference.

Chapter One introduces the main scope of the study. The background of the study briefly explained in this chapter with which ended in forming the statement of the problem and formulating the research objectives prior to the three research questions. Other parts consisted of the significance of the study, limitations, delimitations, and definition of the terms used in this study.

Chapter Two reviews the basic concepts in the literature pertaining to reflection and reflective practices. The main concern of this chapter is to highlight

the recent studies on reflection and reflective journaling and make the argument based on the findings of the previous studies. Based on the conceptual overview of the literature on reflective journaling in general, the focus was directed to find ways to answer the research questions. Further, the theoretical framework of Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) proposed by Mezirow (1991) is guiding this study is discussed in detail with the rationale for using this theory. Furthermore, the Importance-Performance Analysis Matrix (IPA) is clearly and simply explained as an evaluative technique for gaining richer results for drawing conclusions on Pre-Registered Student Nurses' (PRSN) perceptions of RJW.

Chapter Three discusses the process of conducting a case study of the qualitative descriptive methodology for this educational research. This study describes thoroughly the process of collecting and analyzing data for the research questions. Other aspects discussed in this chapter are sampling ethics and instrumentations for quantitative and qualitative parts of the study was discussed along with in some details explanations of variables, internal validity and reliability.

Chapter Four discusses the process of data analysis and findings for the first research question. A structured survey questionnaire was adopted, modified and implemented to collect data from the PRSN's perceptions on Reflective Journal Writing (RJW). Accordingly, SPSS (V.24) is used to get the numerical scores for the descriptive analysis. Then, the mean scores were analyzed against IPA Matrix. With these, the findings for the PRSN's perceptions of RJW are considered significant and substantial to answer the first research question.

Chapter Five discusses the process of data analysis and findings for the second research question. Data is mainly collected through two types of interviews; a Focus

Group Interview (FGI) and one-on-one interviews. The transcriptions of the interview verbatim are undergone inductive and deductive content analysis. In their interviews, PRSN evaluates the role of RJW in the process of developing professional knowledge and skills.

Chapter Six discusses the process and the procedures of data analysis and findings for the third research question. The main source of data is the guided reflective journals entries written by the PRSN. These reflective journals are analyzed inductively and deductively against the content, process, and premise levels of reflection from TLT.

Chapter Seven discusses the conclusion for the previous chapters and implications of this educational research for nursing education, nursing practice as well as for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of reflective journal writing among Malaysian pre-registered student nurses. The review of literature on reflection and reflective practices provided scholarly information to support the objectives and the purpose of this study. In the light of the above, this chapter starts with an overview of reflection and the fundamental role it plays in the process of learning. Then, this chapter will review research on the role of reflective journal writing in the process of developing professional knowledge and skills among the pre-registered student nurses. Finally, a review of existing literature on the main concepts of the theoretical perspectives pertaining to reflective practices will be discussed.

2.2 The Conceptual Overview of Reflection

The issue of how important reflective practice is in learning requires the ability of reflection and the knowledge of the degree of reflection among the learners. Therefore, to make this issue clear, the following section is going to discuss the concept of reflection and reflective practice discernible in learning. One cannot talk about the concept of reflection without over-viewing the radical originality of reflectivity in human life. The necessity to argue about the reflectivity is driven from the fact that the knowledge and experience of a normal individual can be realized in an integrated path for better learning and deeper understanding of the immediate surroundings as well as the world around (Schon, 1987).

It is obvious that reflection has its roots deep in education as far as the time of Socrates. However, with a vast plethora of literature on reflection, Dewey's (1933) ground-breaking claim about reflection has provided us with a simple and yet profound idea. He described reflection as 'the kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious thought'. What is important for Dewey was the initiation of reflective thinking in a state of doubt, uncertainty or difficulty. That is, reflection is a process between recognizing a problem and finding a solution, a problem-solving process. In fact, he associated reflection with thinking and emphasized on the outcome of reflection. According to Dewey (1933), reflection is "an active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusion to which it tends" (p.9). In the light of this definition, the relationship between critical thinking and reflection has interested the minds of educators. Schon (1987) challenged the educators for not just making the learners ready for high capacity of knowledge and competence in a practice setting; he actually recommended educationalists to improve their ability to reflect to be able to guide their learners to reflect more positively. Therefore, the educational system must take an effort to train the trainees and educators to reflect and be reflective practitioners in their lives for the sake of learning (Mackintosh, 1998).

Another remarkable contribution to the theory of reflection is Schon's (1984) innovative thinking around the concept of reflection. His key advocacy on reflective practice differentiated the concept 'reflection-in-action' with 'reflection-on-action'. He associated the former with critical practice as a process that 'thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it' that is a conscious action-based practice, yet not expressed explicitly. Whereas the latter refers to the process of

meaning-making usually an action after the event has occurred. In a more simplified manner, the concept of reflection involves reflection before, during and after the event; each adds in and integrates different types of knowledge (Schon, 1987).

Mann, Gordon, and MacLeod (2009) presented the formal requirements of reflective practice as a part of the licensing and revalidation process for the practitioners. Accordingly, from the lens of reflection and reflective practice, they introduced several lines of beliefs and assumptions. First, effective learning from experience is the offspring of developing critical thought upon the practices throughout the lifetime. This line juxtaposes the model of reflection on experience and practice with which the learners can identify their areas of learning needs (Schon, 1985; Boud et al. 1985). Second, along with the individuals' professional identity development there happens that reflection can cause an integration of the individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and values with the professional culture (Epstein, 1999). Third, active learning requires the understanding and ability to lead and link new knowledge to prior knowledge. Finally, having all the above criteria, the pathway leads the individuals toward the development of self-awareness and self-regulation (Bandura, 1986).

Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985, p.19) stated that "reflection in the context of learning is a generic term and an affective activity for those intellectuals with which they engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations." Furthermore, they upheld the idea of reflection as "an important human activity in which the individuals recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it." Boud et al. (1985a) believed that throughout the learners' educational lives, reflection has been considered as a purpose of involving the learners in their experience, and through which they would think thoroughly

about their previous knowledge, which guides them to new perspectives in life. In this sense, reflection can be a main vehicle of competence in education and knowledge in the process of learning; more positively in a sense that reflection can be a means to reach professional development. Therefore, it can be concluded that the fundamental philosophy of reflection and reflective practice is to assist the individual reflectors to evaluate their level of knowledge and experience. Thus, effective reflection can engage the individual learners in their personal growth and to encourage them to develop more competence to evaluate workplace skills (Chapman & Greenberg, 2009).

Indeed, reflection is mostly known as a synonym for higher-order mental processes. In this regard, Mezirow (1990) described that reflection involves a number of activities such as problem-solving, meaning-making, generalizations, discriminating, expressing emotions, evaluations, analyzing, analogies, judging, discussing, and performing. In line with Mezirow (1990), Schon (1984) advocated that reflection has a great impact in individuals' educational life enabling them to gain personal experience and knowledge to engage in decision-making processes. Thus, the notion of reflection requires a comprehensive understanding of this concept and its place in education. In order to do so, it is essential to be familiar with the underlying philosophies that shape this concept.

2.2.1. Reflection and the Philosophies of Learning

Reflection, without any doubt, has its roots in the cognitive theory of education (Moon, 1999; Merriam, 2004). The issue of how important reflective practice is in the process of learning requires the individual to have the ability of reflection and the knowledge of the degree of reflection. Therefore, to make this issue clear, the

concept of reflection and reflection practice discernible in learning requires explicit explanation.

A common assumption about learning through reflection lies on the fact that learning can take place at any point of time and place in the learners' life. It could be during the working hour or leisure time, through the social or personal interaction or from the formal traditional classroom setting (Shields, 1995). Learning is also not an isolated activity; it is intensified if comes in a form of dialogic and communication with others. Whatever the source of learning is, the learner requires acquiring the ability to learn how to learn from the process with which reflection on personal experience has a significant role. Learning through reflection has this quality of effects of being long-lasting (Clouder, 2000). As a matter of fact, the growing concern on the lifelong learning has emphasized the impact of this dimension of adult learning through reflection; the ability of self-reflection in the direction of the process of self-construction (Wilson & Hayes, 2000).

Many components to reflection pertaining to learning were recognized and introduced in the literature of reflection. For instance, Higgs and Titchen (2000) have advocated the knowledge as it is of three types that are required for clinical decision making. Propositional knowledge is the one that can be expressed in language, books, and journals, mainly scholarly learning in empirical scientific methods. Professional knowledge can be achieved from professional experience which is tacit in nature and revealed through procedural skills. Personal knowledge is a unique frame of reference of an individual. This personal knowledge is the ability to reflect on one's experience and gain advanced knowledge. In the journey of learning, propositional knowledge acquired from books and in the classroom. A novice learner has this formal scientific knowledge but lacks the experience to make

decisions. Benner (1984) described that the novice practitioner develop professional, experiential, and practical knowledge through experiences that enables them to make decisions and justify their decisions to support their actions. Schon (1987) called it reflection-on-action that transforms the experience into knowledge. However, Rolfe and Gardner (2006) declared that the component of reflection and learning our practice associated with generated knowledge. This knowledge itself, on the other hand, when explored has many uses and meanings.

In support of the above discussion, in tourism education, Kim (2013) stated that implementing reflective tasks is a successful practice for facilitating self-directed learning skills among postgraduate learners. She discussed the strategies of giving any form of feedback can support learning among learners in tourism education. In support of reflection for competence development in the context of vocational education and training, Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) pointed out that reflection has a strong connection between the practical element and the theoretical one in workplaces. They believed that effective reflection can allow for deep learning to occur in these two areas. Furthermore, due to the nature of the educational system that requires a great deal of integration of one's prior experience and practice, reflection and reflective practices were found to be of great significance in the field of the healthcare profession. Therefore, the novice student nurses could gain a deeper knowledge and better understanding of the nursing practice in practicum.

Concerning reflective practice in learning, Boud (1999) has commented that students can benefit from reflective practice upon acknowledging their needs and act accordingly instead of, going through learning the theoretical knowledge before coming to the workplace. Therefore, activities toward promoting reflection must be taken in the school system. In short, the relationship associated with the individual,

emotional and personal needs and learning are an integral part of reflection and reflective practice (Mezirow, 1990; Boud, 1998 cited in Chong (2009). Moreover, Milinkovic and Field (2005) also indicated that through reflection, the learners would get deeper insights from their practices, investigate reactions, understand the relationships, and make a link between the new knowledge and the prior knowledge and experience.

Therefore, learning is regarded to be a conscious activity that involves knowledge and experience (Boud, 1985). However, reflective learning exceeds high above a mere taking knowledge, it involves a deeper insight and better understanding of the materials being learned. In other words, it requires being aware and evaluates critically the socio-cultural surroundings of the contexts of learning (Rolfe, 2002; Boud & Walker 1998). For instance, the individual's surroundings can trigger effective positive learning through reflection, not by the individual, but through the individuals present in the same surroundings. That is, in a clinical setting, health care workers know how to reflect as part of their ability of reasoning (Clouder, 2000). Hence, if a problem arises, the process of reflection through sharing thoughts with others from the same knowledge background could be articulated and learning from each other could be largely internalized. Clouder (2000) believes that even novice clinical practitioners could modify these silent reflections obtained through experiences into a learning opportunity. From this vantage point, learning that stems out of the individual's experience and reality of the individual's world can be influential in shaping and reshaping the person's life to the extreme that can be emancipatory- freeing the learners from the teacher (Freire, 1970).

Likewise, Boud et al (1985) stated that reflection, in the context of learning, is an ability with which the individuals explore their experiences to achieve a piece of

new knowledge and understanding. In this situation, the process of learning has occurred during the reflection upon the experience (Ho, 1997). In addition, she suggested that reflective learning activities should be practiced in classes for English for Special Purposes since these ESP learners should be ready for their future profession. Either individually in isolation or in the company of others, reflection on the situation can be a source of learning; in addition, it is possible to forget the situation but not the experience acquired from that situation (Shields, 1995). Moreover, the reflection upon the experience could enhance the durability of the experience. Therefore, reflection from the situation could improve the learning (ibid, 1995). Likewise, it is clearly suggested by Boud et al (1985) that through the light of reflection the minds of the learners anticipate learning from the experience.

In any given individual, the act of learning has occupied a major part of his life, whether it was a realization of new knowledge or the integration of the new and the previous knowledge. Paterson and Chapman (2013) highlighted that the nature of knowledge acquisition from experience and integrating propositional, professional, and personal knowledge are required to develop skills of critical reflection to advance in higher levels of understanding and awareness. In any case, what enhances this act of normal intellectual being is the ability to reflect upon an experience that leads to deep learning that believed to have longer sustainability. As a result, in doing so, the person becomes a "knowledge doer" (Shields, 1995).

In the proposed model of reflection in the process of learning, (Boud et al., 1985) assert three stages of "returning to the experience", "attending to feeling" and "re-evaluating experience." The first stage of returning to the experience or concrete experience has no clear boundaries in time and place. The experience could have occurred in the immediate past or as long as some years. The place may not also be

clear. However, this aspect of the experience from the observation of the past event can be a field for experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). Consequently, it is argued that in the process of learning from experience, the key element is reflective observation (Boud, 1985).

On the other hand, the consideration is more on the negative feeling and undesired emotion associated with past- experience in the second stage. These past experience as defined by Boud (1985) as well as by Boud et al, (1985) refers to the unresolved feeling that can hinder the learning from that experience. They also maintained that if a person wishes to engage in "personal growth" the negative feelings such as anger, regret, dislike, distrust, disorientation, and fear should be dismissed and replaced with positive encouraging, motivating feelings. This engagement in dealing with negative feelings demonstrates that the person has desires to see the personal transformation.

The last stage of the model of the reflection introduced by (Boud et al., 1985) is re-evaluating the experience. There are four elements in this stage: association or relating the new to prior knowledge; integration or finding relationship between the information; validation or determining the reality of the feeling; and the appropriation or making the knowledge one of one's own. They believe that the learners may come to the stage that experiences a change of behaviour with a new perspective of meaning in life (Mezirow, 2000). Thus, it can be concluded that the goal of lifelong learning urges the need to examine thoroughly how learning from experience can be promoted. In this vein, Miller (2000) has asserted that the challenges have augmented for the learners to integrate their learning with their personal experience and develop reflective abilities to internalize the skill within them to reach the point of self-directed learning which is long-lasting.

Some experts in learning theory believe that not all experiences in the person's life may result in learning; which is particularly true in discipline-based learning (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997). Likewise, Dewey (1933) believed also in education that initiated from the experience, however, he stated that not always the experience ends in education and learning. As he mentioned experiences are sometimes misleading and harmful if they are not reflected upon. Therefore, experiences can be helpful in education when it is thoughtfully analyzed and reflected upon to be used in future activities. Moreover, understanding from the experiences is that they become the potential key concepts to make the individual learner reach the stage of personal growth (Glen & Nelson, 1988).

The experiential learning theory of Kolb (1984) has been shaped upon the foundational work of Dewey. The four aspects of Kolb's theory, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation provide a conceptual framework for service-learning educators. According to Kolb (1981), the process of learning can begin at any point of learners' life; however, it is highly depended on the individual learning style. What has been postulated from the Kolb's theory is that reflection is an essential element to the process of learning, because reflection can link the abstract to the concrete. According to the experiential learning theory proposed by Kolb (1984) that signalled the personal experience as the point of departure for learning, then the reflection upon the experience could translate learning as the most important activity of one's life endeavour.

Following Kolb, Gibbs (1988) introduces his idea of reflection upon a clear description of the situation. Similar to Boud (1985), Gibbs also proposes that one's feelings are associated with reflection; when he suggests his reflective cycle that starts with a description of the situation, analysis of feeling, evaluation of the

experience to make sense of it. Then, the learner reflects upon experience and finally takes action to complete the reflective cycle. Johns (2000) introduces a model for structured reflection, which can be used as a guide for analysis of reflection on experience. He supports the approach of using guided reflection with which the learners and educators work together throughout the learning process. He believes this sharing reflection creates a better understanding of the experience than writing reflective texts to practice reflection.

In the domain of reflection and the philosophy of learning, Dewey (1938) advocates experiential education, writing experience and education. He maintains that experiential education is a philosophy of education that defines the practice between a teacher and student that involves direct experience with the learning environment and content. This term, however, is not interchangeable with experiential learning, as it is a sub-field of experiential education. Dewey, as an educational philosopher, advocated that education is grounded upon the quality of experience. For him, not every experience is educational, unless certain parameters had to be met. He believes the experience must have continuity and embedded with interaction; that is; experience comes from an idea and leads to other experiences, in essence, that forcing and driving the person to learn especially when the experience meets the internal needs or goals of a person. Nevertheless, he points out that experiential learning cannot be replaced by traditional methods of learning but complements it. In that situation, learning can be gained by practicing, for instance, in a simulation lab (common in nursing education) where additional skills, a new perspective, and improved understanding are explored. Experiential education offered examples in various disciplines. For instance, writing journals have been proven to be effective as students find meaning in their own thoughts as well as in

concepts learned in class (Schon, 1984; Mezirow, 2000). Reflective journaling is the recording of the past experience, present personal thought, and the impact of events on the student's life to enhance learning.

Likewise, a framework for reflective practice is proposed by Rolfe et al in 2001. Their framework consists of three levels of "what", "so what", and "now what." The framework that appears cyclical answers "what" at a descriptive level where the learners describe the situation following reflection; and then the knowledge level of learners about the situation answers "so what", and finally action related level of reflection is answered by the question of "now what." They consider the last level an action related reflection that the learners construe knowledge to improve the situation. Moreover, Moon, (1999, p.80) explained that reflection underpins self-development. In this case, it is under the control of the individual and personal development that may involve the acquisition and assimilation of the new information through the process of reflection. According to the constructivist view of learning, Moon emphasized that the individual learner would conceive the knowledge in an organized network that assists the learners to construct their prior knowledge through the cognitive structure process of assimilation and accommodation. Equally, Dewey linked reflection with thinking and emphasizes on the outcome of reflection. He considered that the quality of reflection highly depends on the skill and the attitude that demonstrated in form of actions based on the individuals' ideas representing the reflective activity (Moon, 1999). Dewey believed that reflection has a great impact on learning and stated, 'We learn by doing and realizing what emerges out of what we did' (Moon, 1999, p. 12).

In this regard, Mezirow reiterates that Dewey's ideas on reflection have influenced him as well when he introduced the levels of reflection and learning,

through which the perspective transformation would immerge. Mezirow, (1997) indicated that understanding our experience is a common condition of being human. Unlike some who follow others, most individuals would involve in meaning-making and interpreting their own experience from the perspective of their own beliefs, purposes, judgments, and assumptions. Facilitating such understanding is the fundamental goal of adult education that conceptually and empirically frames transformative learning in adult higher and continuing education (Taylor, 1997).

Regarding adult education advocated by Mezirow, Habermas (1984) has an inspiring idea of the effects on the development of generic domains of adult learning introduced by Mezirow. According to Habermas, problem-solving ability and learning involves understanding the environment or its members, which refers to the instrumental aspect of learning. This type of learning involves one's impression on others and the normal, common values of individuals. On the other hand, since the communication between these individuals is inevitable, learning through understanding of the meaning and the interpretation of what is communicated occurs to the point of reaching agreements. Mezirow (1998) stated that the instrumental learning can be assessed and tested while reflection can provide us with a clear understanding of underlying purposes, values, feelings, and beliefs to evaluate communicative learning.

According to the above discussion, different models of learning through reflection were introduced and there is no right or wrong model. However, the ideal model is the one that assists the learners to learn from the experience and engage them in reflective writing as a strategy of self-directed learning. In such a model the learners are able to demonstrate the change in their conceptual perspective emphasized by Mezirow in his Transformative Learning Theory (TLT). This ability

to see differently and viewing a situation can be concomitant with an action. Atkins and Murphy (1994) stated that, "action is the final stage of reflection." According to Tarrant (2013), this action is considered a step to planning for ideal exploration of experiments that create enhanced future performance. Moreover, in the same vein, he reiterated that reflection could develop a range of skills in a person namely, "being comfortable with other people, being able to describe their practice in a reflective and thoughtful way, being able to articulate their thoughts, and being able to trust other people" (Tarrant, 2013, p.67).

2.2.2 Reflection and Work Place Learning

The evidence of learning from the workplace rather than from the more traditional academic classroom has verified in literature (Chapman et al, 2009; Plack et al, 2007; Boldrini & Cattaneo (2014). Likewise, knowing how to cope with the demands, expectations, and challenges in the environment is recommended to those learners that their profession is deeply related to the environment; for example, clinical environment for student nurses. Natasa, Majda, and Zvonka, (2019, p. 61) asserted that reflection has learning value and "contributes to better learning." They reiterated that learning from workplace experience is the actual reflection that incorporating new knowledge with previous knowledge and taking into consideration this overall experience to improve practice. Accordingly, the work-based experience has assured the practical knowledge for development in professional subject areas. The technique enhanced this type of learning refers to reflection. Reflective practice is an activity that individuals undergo the process of revisiting and analysing their experiences for better and deeper learning, and if occurs in practicum, ultimately it can lead to improving workplace knowledge (Chapman et al, 2009; Mann et al., 2009; Natasa et al., 2019). Subsequently, the reflective practice has been encouraged

for the learners to look at the learning situation from different perspectives through reflection. Through the process of reflection, the learners become enable to develop critical thinking skills (Brookfield, 1987), work place practical knowledge (Chapman et al., 2009), and look into their learning needs (Milinkovic and Field, 2005), facilitating professional development, problem solving and lifelong learning (Plack et al. 2007; Chapman et al. 2009; Chirema, 2007; Mezirow, 2000; Kear, 2013).

Schon (1995) is amongst the first pioneer to relate the reflection and workplace learning. He introduced his prophecy of professional practice into two levels. On one level, there is the high ground of scientific knowledge and on the other level, workplace knowledge that is uncertain, complex, and unique. According to Schon, it is at the second level where the learners think about their knowledge, prior experience, and develop learning through trial and error. In other words, experiencing uncertainty and confusion in the workplace leads the learners to the stage of reflection. As Schon indicates, through the process of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, the learners actively explore and discover new knowledge, with which they can overcome the sense of uncertainty. In this regard, he closely bounds the reflection with action, which results in professional learning and personal growth (Schon, 1991). The findings of the study conducted by Plack and Greenberg (2005) support Schon's idea of workplace learning. In this study, they suggest that the aim of reflection is constructing meaning out of the experience; so, the learners need to get involved in developing analytical and critical thinking skills. These experiences can help learners to become mature enough to make effective decisions in their work place. Moreover, the learner must be informed that looking or revisiting the experiences is not the main goal but reflecting on the experiences is much more important and significant for deep learning and achieving professional

growth (Schon, 1985). The role of reflection in workplace learning particularly in clinical situations is discussed in study conducted by Usher, Tollefson, and Francis in 1991. They assert that the learners' ability to reflect must be developed to give meaning to clinical skills that shape an experience for the future encounter in clinical practice. Likewise, Wong et al (1995) maintain that the main purpose of reflection is to help the caregivers realize how to react in clinical situations professionally and competently. Clinical education not only requires related skills that the learners must have obtained from the classroom, but also the learners must be able to reflect upon the clinical practice they participate.

Considering reflection in the workplace and journaling, Tarrant (2013) pointed out that documenting reflections are only part of a big picture. He asserted that what the learners need is to turn these reflections into action; the action that "provides opportunities for recording planned action for personal development" (p.12). It can be concluded that some actions, simple or complicated, can be planning for doing something that worked well in the request for some professional development in the workplace.

As the above discussion suggests, individuals' engagement in reflective thinking is self-empowering as it enables them to be aware of their feelings and perceive reflection as an ability to inquire, analysis and evaluate. However, Freire (1993) argues that the experience of empowering should not be reflected as an individual activity but as a social one. He suggests that essential constituents for change in society are critical reflection and transformative action. Accordingly, the term 'conscientization' was first used by him to describe this change; to self and to the society. As evidence, constructivism influences the construction of knowledge where the practitioners are active in their learning. Lestander, Lehto, and Engstrom

(2016) state that with reflection, the learners focus on "Maturing in the profession." They point out that peer learning is a social factor that can increase learning outcome.

2.2.3 Reflection and Reflective Practitioner

Confucius, the Chinese philosopher and the educator once said, "I hear, and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand." This saying has enlightened the root of active learning that emphasizes on the process of inner critical reflection when the learners engage in certain activities that promote reflection and questioning. The quality of this reflection assists the learners in communication, exploration, analyses, and creation of the surroundings and gives values to the new knowledge (Wang & King, 2006; Plack & Greenberg, 2005). Similarly, Allan and Driscoll (2014) pointed out about a feature of reflection that it reveals about learners beliefs on the allocation of learning, the ability to adjust knowledge from immediate learning context. They asserted that a reflector is one who acquires learning by building precise connections to prior, current, and future body of knowledge. Their ideas convey this message to learners to develop meta-awareness about where they can apply their prior knowledge. Reflective practitioners should understand the learning goals and being aware of approaches to reach these goals (Allan & Driscoll, 2014).

An ocean size of literature pertaining to reflection has accentuated on the fact that reflection is for learning namely Jasper and Rolfe (2011), Chirema (2007), Moon (1999), Mann et al., (2009), and the more recent one Bjerkvik and Hilli (2019). A plethora of studies have reiterated that all learners, irrespective of their academic background, can learn and excel if instructional methods promotes the development

of inquiring and reflective learners, these two qualities help learners use their acquired knowledge instead of merely claim of ownership of that knowledge (Mann et al., 2009; Dyment & O'Connell, 2010). In the debate about what to reflect upon, how to do it, and how to turn a reflection into meaningful action, Tarrant (2013) maintained that reflection without meaningful action cannot exist. Reflective practitioners must be able to perform in such direction that these meaningful actions lead to developing professionalism; that is, the reflector is in control and has ownership of the situation, a "meaningful self-initiated reflection" (p.7). In this regard, educators and learners alike must cooperate in the reflective practice if they want to get the most benefit out of the opportunity provided for them through the reflective practices.

Although the educational role of reflection in learning has been proven, however, how to implement it requires more attention. Thus, it can be seen that the majority of literature pertinent to reflection and the process of reflective writing concentrate basically on the underlying concept of learning without realizing "teaching" as a significant part of the learning process. In a pedagogical context, where reflection and reflective practice are performed as a teaching-learning technique, the main player is the educators who might be identified as preceptors, facilitators, reflective practitioner, and critical reflector (Schon, 1987; Duffy, 2009; Coward, 2011; Plack & Greenberg, 2005).

The terms of reflection and reflective practice have been in the literature of nursing education both as a learning strategy and as a means of promoting professional skills (Mackintosh, 1997; Mann et al., 2009; Coward, 2011). As a professional and educational requirement, the purpose of reflection for the nurse educators is to be reflectors and to encourage their learners to practice critical

reflection and lead them toward high order thinking (Coward, 2011; Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Kreber & Cranton, 2000; Rolfe et al., 2001).

Accordingly, Duffy (2009) asserted that, "preceptors need to support students in questioning, analyzing and reflecting upon their practice." (p. 167). Moreover, she questioned the preceptors of having experience and knowledge in being reflective. Similarly, Atkins and Murphy (1993) suggested self-awareness, able to analyze critically, synthesize and evaluate as the principle skills necessary to be reflective. Therefore, teachers' techniques in posing challenging questions can be stimulating for learners to think critically, and thus improving their ability in solving a problem and making sound decisions (Duffy, 2009). Therefore, nurse educators must develop their reflective ability and seek help to improve this ability. Johns (1993) has stated that nurse educators require direction and assistance to develop their practice. In short, in accordance with the above discussion, learning varied among individuals and tended to depend on factors such as reflection that influence learning. In line with reviews, learners' abilities and willingness to reflect largely rely on expectation and quality and quantity of feedback received from their teacher who is a reflective practitioner (Bjerkvik & Hilli, 2019).

2.3 The Conceptual Overview of Reflective Journal Writing

The following section will discuss the relationship between two academic tasks of reflection and reflective writing. In fact, if reflective writing is assigned for learning purposes, then the key element is the reflection. Reflective journal writing (RJW) is an assignment utilized to prove the evidence of active, self-directed learning, and reflective practice (Azer, 2008).

One of the main concerns about reflection lies in writing practices that can equip future professionals. In a study conducted with 80 students from four graduate cohort groups aged between 20-48 years old, Burdina (2013) revealed through reflective writings analysis and survey that some students could control their learning by being conscious cognitively, emotionally and motivationally. Burdina (2013) believed that reflective writing can be a source of motivation to study theoretical courses. She states that reflective writing as a teaching tool can link the theoretical and practical elements of the study. That is, teachers may choose to practice reflection and reflective writing as a pedagogical intervention to place students into more active involvement in their learning. In this condition, students learn in the more personalized process by experiencing a less fearful climate which is more conducive to learning. In short, she found out that the administration of reflective writing not only empowered and motivated students in their theoretical course but also made them be more effective learners Burdina (2013).

Similarly, Conte (2015) considered a portfolio or learning journal among pharmacy students as a document to provide evidence of different levels of reflection. She reiterates that this reflection is unique process that requires the active involvement of preceptors in the process of reflection among their students. In her conceptual model of reflection, she lists out the elements for the students to develop the ability of reflection. She believes that the student's active participation is the first common element related to reflection. Although some students believe reflective activities are just useless and time-consuming and not pertinent to their learning, some others are motivated and interested in reflective activities. It is clear that having such attitudes toward reflective practices makes them less motivated to reflective

practices. She states that the latter group believes that reflective practices make them efficient and capable of completing their duty (Conte, 2015).

The second common element pertaining to reflection, according to Conte (2015) was the situation. Situation refers to any combination of settings for teaching, critical incidents, experience, and emotions. Then, the preceptors use novice students' portfolios to understand students better because these writings contain their past experiences and his or her expectation. When students write about the new situation that causes dilemmas or initiates concern, it can show the importance of reflection for preceptors to make better decisions that are appropriate to students' professional practice.

The third element related to reflection, according to Conte (2015), was the examination of students' responses and beliefs to a given situation or experience. She believes that this examination provides new understanding of students' characteristics, of their willingness to learn and desire to improve and their receptiveness towards possible negative feedback, and more importantly their goal-oriented personality. Upon these considerations, students would reveal elements of critical reflection if they can link past, present and future knowledge, integrate the cognitive and emotional experience, and plan for future learning. These are parts of reflection practices that can help students to reframe problems and solve problem accordingly. The last element of reflection described by Conte (2015) is the by-product which is the result of the last three elements. The metaphor of "by-product" described as "a result" or "a consequence" of the reflection that could create a new learning process. Although not all by-products are initiated by deep reflection, the process of reflection guiding future actions can be perceived with practice. Even though reflection may occur unexpectedly, it can be planned systematically.

Preceptors' active involvement in their students' reflective activities plays a fundamental role because they can assist them to improve their ability to experience deep reflection.

Another mixed-method study conducted by Constantinou and Kuys (2013) with 74 participants among which 57 female and male physiotherapy students, respectively. These participants provided their perception of writing journals was evaluated by a questionnaire. Five cohorts participated and completed reflective journal writings in their first clinical placement. The findings of this study indicate that physiotherapy students have a positive idea about reflective journal writing and perceive it as a useful tool to facilitate reflective thinking. Moreover, some students expressed their idea about this exercise as meaningful and supported the practice of writing journals. The outcome of this study suggests that reflective practices are beneficial in increasing students' self-awareness and can develop their reflective thinking and practice (Constantinou & Kuys, 2013).

Romova and Andrew (2011) examined the use of reflective writing as a pedagogical tool for developing academic writing. A group of 41 first-year BA learners from multicultural background participated in this study that enrolled in the course of 'Academic Writing' at tertiary level. Focus group interviews and regular portfolio writing were the sources of data for this qualitative grounded theory study. The findings indicate that learning Academic Writing helps learners undertake more responsibility for their own advancement in writing. Moreover, the portfolio emphasizes the importance of learning not only as a meta-cognitive process but as a social activity that assists them in writing texts in the context of the discourse communities of practice.

Reflective practice has been considered as a practice that challenges the learners in the field of their study for learning competently (Schon, 1987; Mezirow, 1991; Boud et al., 1985). Reflection as a cognitive activity that every individual experience throughout the life for the better learning and deep understanding of the experience; therefore, reflective writing can be a beneficial venue for the reflective practice to be expressed (Chirema, 2007; Milinkovic & Field, 2005). According to the academic discipline, the task of reflective writing is regarded differently. In addition, in the academic discipline of nursing, the reflective writing has the reputation of a learning practice that explores the learners' experience toward new understanding and constructing new knowledge (Chirema, 2007).

The term reflective journal writing, on the other hand, has been used throughout this study to convey the nature of the writing tasks conducted by the pre-registered student nurses. It refers to a piece of text that is written after reflection is expected to occur in a workplace arena. In the literature aiming to discuss this type of writing, there may appear other terminologies, such as log and the diary as a synonym for a journal (Moon, 1999), portfolio (Azer, 2008), reflective writing (Plack et al, 2007), journal (Dyment & O'Connell, 2010), reflective journaling (Epp, 2008; Chirema, 2007), reflective clinical journal (Milinkovic & Field, 2005), and reflective journal writing (Harris, 2008).

Jasper (1999) has used reflective journal writing among the student nurses to write not only about their reflection on the experience obtained in the clinical setting, but also how they learn to express their feelings and knowledge in a form of writing. In the case of pre-registered student nurses, their reflective writing can reveal their ability to reflective critical thinking about their knowledge and skills of the context around them. Accordingly, nurse instructors can use a pedagogy that incorporates a

clinical study with reflective journal writing as a way to assess their student's knowledge, confidence, and self-regulation. By analyzing their student's reflective writing, nurse educators can guide the student's ability to deliver and manage responsible, ethical, and empathic patient care. Furthermore, by teaching reflective writing skills, nursing educators can guide their students to develop acute self-awareness and, thus, better patient care (McMillan-Coddington, 2013).

2.3.1 Reflective Education and Journal Writing

The rapid changes in education have challenged the learners to be emotionally confident and professionally competent. For this reason, reflection and reflective practice are believed to be the point of departure to meet these educational challenges. The learners have come to this conclusion that reflection is more than just thoughtful practice or contemplative thinking. Effective reflection relates to a thought process that establishes a baseline of understanding of the different concepts, values, and beliefs initiated inter-personally or intra-personally that   play significant role in the process of learning (Boud et al, 1985; Mezirow, 2000; Schon, 1987). The term reflective practitioners were first introduced by Schon (1984) that are in demand in the constantly changing world today. According to him, the reflective practitioner can reflect upon the old experience to develop new knowledge and is able to bring this tacit knowledge to the surface in order to acquire deep and lifelong learning.

The use of reflective journal writing, as widely used around the world, has been generally practiced in a variety of other fields as well to document learning. For instance, among student teachers, reflective journaling helps them improve, link their present knowledge with new information, and identify their weaknesses (Richards &

Ho, 1998 cited in Abednia et al 2013). In their study, Abednia, Hovassapian and Teimornejhad (2013), explored the in-service teachers' perceptions regarding the challenges and contributions of reflective journal writing. In this regard, the teachers considered RJW has great potential to help them improve their self-awareness and reasoning that is enhancing critical thinking. However, they expressed their disappointment toward RJW because of the high demand for preparations prior to class discussions.

Furthermore, Rassaei (2015, p.121) pointed out about the sociocultural aspect of reflective journaling. He stated that "in a language classroom, keeping a learning journal in a language classroom can be regarded as a dialogic activity which triggers the interaction between learner and himself or herself. It is dialogic in the sense that it helps learners talk to themselves regarding their past experiences." Kim (2013) looks at reflective journal writing of students in tourism education from different perspectives. She asked the students to write a short reflection linking to various class activities for over 10 weeks. She believes that the application of RJW can provide good feedback to facilitate self-directed learning. Her findings support Boud et al., (1985), Mann et al., (2009), and Schon (1983) who consider RJW as an innovative tool to improve student-directed learning provided that students are encouraged to reflect on the subject topic and 'what they do' and 'why'.

According to Braine (2009), nurses aspire to be reflective practitioners; so, they engage in reflective practices to reach the level of competency which is considered to have many attributes of reflective practices such as problem-solving skills and critical thinking. In the current Nursing program for pre-registered student nurses, reflective practice is an explicit component of the nursing curriculum in the context of this study. However, it is integrated, not discrete, and is less explicit with

pre-registered student nurses (PRSN) expected to undertake one formal reflective journal writing during their three-year program. As discussed earlier, the necessity of reflection for the PRSN enables them to analyze their feelings and knowledge as well as identify which knowledge and experience require further expansion. The main consideration that leads this study is the reflective journal writing tasks that participants create for their course requirements. According to the problems argued in Chapter One regarding the reflective journal writing among these participants, this section will address the concerning questions to be answered by using the transformative learning theory proposed by Mezirow (1990, 1991, and 2000).

2.3.2 Reflective Journal Writing in Nursing Context

Nursing program is scheduled to prepare nurses to become knowledgeable registered nurses in the future who are clinically competent and personally as well as professionally developed to meet the challenges in nursing. Ordinary tests and examinations on papers can easily assess the knowledge of theories and classroom instructions; whereas well-developed clinical checklists can assess student nurses' clinical skills. In this regards, reflective journal writing has been considered a strategy to deal with these challenges facing the nursing profession.

Logs, reports, journals, or narratives are different versions of writing that promote reflection. Reflective journals are commonly written by the student nurses individually and during their private time away from others. RJW is an effective method that promotes meaningful, effective reflection (Schon, 1984). Reflective journal writing has been considered a significant tool in nursing education to stimulate active learning among students. Nurse educators encourage student nurses to reflect, that is to think about past experiences, present situations, and expected

consequences of their practice. This, according to Thorpe (2004), can help student nurses to explain what they are doing and why. In other words, nurse educators promote professional nursing practice that is more reflective rather than merely routine (Thorpe, 2004). Schon (1987) introduced the significant impact of critical reflection on the development of professional and clinical knowledge. The ability to employ critical-thinking skills enhances student nurses to be more creative and resourceful which can assist them to achieve lifelong learning.

Moreover, reflective journal writing could assist the learners to promote critical reflection among the pre-registered student nurses toward the professional skills and to achieve the ultimate competency from the reflection (Chapman et al., 2009; Kear, 2013). Similarly, the role of reflective writing is considered fundamental in promoting meaningful learning and improving effective reflection. Likewise, Mezirow (1997) declared several ways to stimulate transformational learning through reflection, including journal writing, group projects, role play, case studies and many more. He believes these could stimulate critical consciousness and critical reflection that are integral parts of the transformative process. What was strongly emphasized by Mezirow was that transformational learning could be realized when the experiences were discussed and explored.

Furthermore, Mezirow (1981), states that reflective writing can facilitate autonomy in learners when they take responsibility for their own learning and gradually are capable of achieving lifelong learning. Thus, a liberated learner is a self-directed learner that has engaged in critical reflection. For the sake of analysis, the learners are placed in broad categories of non-reflector, reflector, and critical reflector. The learners who manifest no sign of reflection and mainly describe the situation rather than analyzing it are categorized as non-reflector. In addition, some

learners may demonstrate some evidence of ability in applying and relating to the prior knowledge and skills to the new conditions are categorized as a reflector. Furthermore, the other category is the critical reflector; when the learners critically analyze and examine the prior experience and their roles and will reach the level of higher-order of thinking to solve the problem, make decisions and make meaning out in the current context (Chirema, 2007; Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Milinkovic & Field, 2004; Taylor-Haslip, 2010).

Reflective writing in nursing education is a writing activity that requires thinking and reflection upon an event or an experience in a clinical setting. Reflective writing provides significant opportunities for nurses to explore their understanding and insights regarding the knowledge, values, and beliefs pertaining to the situation or condition that initiated the reflection. In doing so, they demonstrate their ability of content, process and premise reflection on the clinical experience in the form of reflective writing. These elements of identification from the reflective writing will highlight the rationale for their inability to reflect on a higher level of thinking and write more reflectively (Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Kreber &Cranton, 2000; McAllister, 2012).

When the student nurses start their hospital practice, the development of the student nurses is the concern of clinical staff and clinical educators. In line with this view, according to Mahlanze and Sibiya (2017), student nurses' reflective journal writing and their language abilities in expressing their feelings should be taken into consideration. They believe that nurse mentors must take serious actions to listen to student nurses' voices in order to nurture open communication through reflective journal writing. In doing so, they can improve their student-centeredness in the nursing curriculum.

From the perspective nature of some discipline specific programs, for instance, nursing, writing task plays a marginal role due to the limited number of writing activities required from them. However, they have to fulfil the requirements of writing in the form of disciplinary portfolio or reflective journal writing. Reflective journal writing plays a vital role in the process of learning, and in the field of nursing education, this academic writing cultivates considerable domains.

2.3.2.1 The Process of Learning

The reflective journal writing is frequently utilized as an educational tool in the education of the health care professionals to promote reflection from the workplace to help them deal with clinical situations (Azer, 2008; Jasper, 1999; Milinkovic & Field 2005; Dyment & O'Connell, 2010; Tarrant, 2013; Boldrini & Cattaneo, 2014). In this regard, the use of an effective clinical reflection is encouraged to integrate the principles, theory, and research in the clinical setting. In this workplace condition the learners can consider reactions, look into relationships, relate new meanings to previous learning, and acquire knowledge from experience (Milinkovic & Field, 2005; Usher et al., 1991; Boud, 2001; Plack & Greenberg 2005; Azer, 2008; Rolfe, et al., 2001; Tarrant, 2013). In accordance with this view, Mezirow (1981) has pointed out that learning and acquiring knowledge from one's experience through reflection and reflective journaling is a personal endeavour that learning is enhanced and the learners can claim the ownership to that learning.

Since it is expected from the learners to write a reflective clinical journal after their clinical practice; then, the learners would pay more attention to their knowledge and their accomplishment from the practicum. The learners are well familiar with the situations involving them in learning from their prior knowledge and their own

learning, which all depends on their ability of meaning-making from the clinical experience expected to be reflected in their reflective journal writing (Jasper, 1999; Mezirow, 1991; Bjerkvik & Hilli, 2019). Consequently, if students engage themselves actively in the learning process, their knowledge would support them with a better understanding of the course content, enhances their knowledge development and reinforces theoretical information (Taylor-Haslip, 2010; Tarrant, 2013). This will strengthen the students' ability to appropriately make application of the course theory to the clinical performance-based skills required to become competent practitioners (Chirema, 2007; Taylor-Haslip, 2010; Tarrant, 2013).

If learning from the reflection is the goal for nursing students, then they must be able to reflect in a level that can provide knowledge and deep understanding from the experience acquired from the practicum, from the actions taken by experts one of the nursing educators or even peers (Mann et al., 2009; Mezirow, 1981; Chirema, 2007). However, some students cannot reflect on the level that they could learn from it, so they acquire new skills and knowledge. Chirema (2007) stated the reasons for the learners' inability to reflect are the lack of trust and support from the teacher necessary for learning to occur. Besides that, however, Chong (2009) believes this inability to reflection has roots in insufficient briefing in the tutorial for reflection. Therefore, in order to facilitate reflection, nursing educators must be aware and knowledgeable of the levels of reflection and the students' ability to process information through reflection (Kear, 2013; Duffy, 2008; Plack, 2005). Consequently, mentoring to assist learners to reflect is the strategy to empower the learners to get the advantage of reflection for the sake of enhanced learning.

2.3.2.2 Self-Awareness and Empowerment

Reflective journal writing contributes significantly to the assimilation of knowledge among pre-registered student nurses. The concept of reflective journal writing and its relationship to the learners' empowerment in nursing education has a long history of research. It has been believed that this task of writing represents the reflection that can integrate the gap between theory and practice (Schon, 1985). Moreover, it has been revealed that the learners can realize their gap in knowledge through reflective journal writing; that is, they can captivate traditional classroom learning and workplace practice. Literature refers to this ability as an act towards professionalism; an ability that the student nurses are directed to reflect and express it in their writing to demonstrate self-knowledge and express their feelings (Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Jasper, 1999; Kear, 2013; Milinkovic & Field, 2005).

Reflective journal writing initiated from effective reflection has long-lasting learning as the by-product. To achieve this type of learning, the students are required having knowledge of multiple literacies, being able to explore the areas of their learning needs and requirements, and ability to integrate the prior knowledge and recent experience from the clinical setting (Schon, 1984). Moreover, Azer (2008, p.361) indicates the reason for using portfolio writing in the process of learning by saying that: "Portfolios provide evidence of learners' competence and personal and professional growth; learners have the opportunity to learn from the challenging situations, and assess the development of skills such as a critical thinking and self-evaluation."

Furthermore, reflective journal writing can help nurses to develop the analytical and critical reflective thinking skills Jasper (1999). In addition to this the

development of reflective writing skills facilitated by the reflective clinical journal allows the learner to investigate their own thinking and understanding, and in this way, encourages the active involvement of students in their own learning (Callister, 1993; Davies, 1995; Usher et al., 1991). As matter of fact, Chirema (2007) pointed out on the rationale for using RJW on its learning benefit to nursing and other health-related programs. She believed that this academic task of reflective journal writing can develop the learners' self-awareness about how well they can learn from the workplace experience. She states that through RJW, student nurses can improve the interpersonal relationship with their peers and colleagues in the process of their learning, increase critical analysis, and enhance cognitive and clinical reasoning and learning. Likewise, in their findings, Lestander and Engstrom (2016) pointed out that maturing in the nursing profession can occur when student nurses demonstrate their appreciation of their peers and other more knowledgeable ones in the workplace in RJW. As they are aware of gaps in their knowledge and feeling of inadequacy, student nurses show that they are able to reflect over time, which in turn indicates increased self-confidence and a sense of belonging.

Moreover, Moon (1999) emphasized on the self- understanding that the student nurses can acquire through the process of reflective journal writing along with recognizing their feelings, attitudes, and realizing their levels of cognitive and affective dimension in learning. Regardless of the style of reflection, reflective thinking encourages individual learners to take part in the challenging act of reflective scientific observation that views professional practice in a more purposeful manner. Similarly, in the generic pieces of reflective journal writing produced by the student nurses, the concept of negotiation between them and the content teacher easily reveals the fact that they perceived writing as a medium of mutual

communication and the means of professionalism. Thus, the participants use RJW for communication purposes to tell their teachers about their amount of knowledge gained in the clinical posting, to tell them about their self-esteem and how they cope with the clinical situation. In short, according to a study conducted by Mahlanze and Sibiya (2017), they found that participants supported the use of RJW and appreciate the improvement in their practice in the clinical environment. They also maintained that RJW could improve their personal and professional development.

2.3.2.3 Development of Critical Thinking

In a rapid changing condition of health care system causes new challenges for the novice student nurses. To face these challenges in the workplace they need to acquire an ability of a higher level of thinking (Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Tanner, 2006; Chapman et al. 2009; McAllister, 2012).

The ability of a higher level of thinking make these task-oriented novice student nurses ready to get involved in making decisions and solving problem in real life of clinical situation. From the constructivist perspective, it is commonly emphasized that reflective journal writing facilitates deep learning because of reflective journaling provides opportunities for connection between cognitive and emotions, between past and present experience, and between old and new knowledge (O'Farrell, 2007; Constantinou & Kuys, 2013; Allan & Driscoll, 2014; Conte. 2015). Reflective writing also has a tenet of discovery of the best condition under which the individual learner could learn and make meaningful learning out of the enriched experience (O'Farrell, 2007).

In line with the above views, it can be argued that the focal point of the reflective clinical journal is on the thinking process of the students, rather than on the

clinical content (Milinkovic & Field, 2005). Moreover, reflection in the clinical setting forces students to acknowledge the strengths and limitations in their ability to make decisions concerning patient care (Taylor-Haslip, 2010; Borglin, 2012). Reflective journals depict journeys of developing awareness, which comprise students' narratives and analysis of their nursing practice and learning experiences thereby providing opportunities to highlight critical thinking (Harris, 2005; Kear, 2013). However, Coward, (2012) has questioned the validity of the use of reflective journal writing in nursing education. She believes that Schon's seminal work (1987) on reflection actually restricted thinking. According to her personal belief, the overuse of structured models of reflection is the primary reason for this restriction. Rolfe et al., (2001) had a similar idea to Coward's idea. They remarked that models of reflection are for educators to support their learners in constructing ways of thinking. Hence, for the student nurses to improve the ability of reflection with regards to critical thinking, the utmost importance is taking into account the role of nurse educator. This inquiry would develop a high order of thinking skills in student nurses and help them to move away from the merely vocational position towards the professional status of nursing (Coward, 2012). On the other hand, Mackintosh, (1998) asserted that there is a need for sufficient empirical evidence to support this idea that reflection can facilitate nurses in becoming critical thinkers. According to her, the reason for this insufficiency is the unstructured implementation of reflection and reflective practice that may have a detrimental effect on the nurses.

It is important to have reliance and confidence in the positive impact of reflection in the nurse education. Moon (2008) has reiterated that deep rather than superficial reflection sometimes referred to critical thinking that would enable novice student nurses to gain deeper learning. Accordingly, Plack and Greenberg (2005)

indicated that being a skillful reflector in a clinical setting greatly requires the learners to be critical thinkers that are the basis for reflective clinical decision-making, which is at the heart of the quality practice. Further, Harris (2008) states that critical reflection is a developmental process and, in fact, the ability to recognize, accept and value one's own thinking requires time and practice. Therefore, the idea of utilizing journal writing as a mechanism for unfolding experiences is shared among many researchers. They also believe that learners can use their ability to reflect, analyze and think critically about the process of learning. These writing tasks would embody the student nurses' ability to analyze and reflect upon a real-life event, on a tangible experience, or upon a clinical incidence (Pee, Woodman, Fry, & Davenport, 2002; Shields, 1995; Jenson & Denton, 1991; Mezirow, 1990; Boud, 2001; Williams, et al., 2002; Plack et al., 2007).

Moreover, to highlight another positive impact of reflective journaling is that novice student nurses can realize the importance of the genres used in their writing that help them to demonstrate their understanding of the academic context and actual clinical experiences (Parks, 2001; cited in DePalma & Ringer, 2011). Thus, these learners need guidance to produce journals that contain the reflected facts, rather than just recording daily events (Mann et al., 2009; Chirema, 2007). According to Plack and Greenberg (2005), if constructing a new meaning out of the experience is the aim for reflection, then the guidance toward developing analytical and critical thinking skills are necessary to help the learners become mature enough to make effective decisions in their workplace (Kear, 2013). Moreover, the learner must be informed that looking or revisiting the experiences is not the main goal but reflecting on the experiences is much more important and significant for deep learning and achieving professional growth (Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Kear, 2013).

2.3.2.4 Professional Identity

During the clinical practice, the student nurses are in constant interventions with other members of the health group, peers and clinical teachers. The student nurses are assigned and twinned with other staff nurses whom they can learn the nursing skills from as well as other academic activity such as writing collaboratively (Parks, 2000). Parks believes that the student nurses can develop their competence in writing of reflective genres that could represent the student nurses' progression in the hospital community of practice. Moreover, through the process of writing, the student nurses would adapt what fits better in the particular hospital setting and similarly acquire the disciplinary knowledge required from them. In this way, they could have gradually reduced their reliance on the more experienced others and increased their ability in socializing through the process of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991). More importantly, there are expectations placed on nurses and they have to take advantage of every opportunity to live up to those expectations. McAllister (2012) declared that student nurses must learn how to meet these expectations to establish professional standards.

Morton et al (1989) sited in Katznelson, Perpignan, & Rubin, (2001) indicated that writing in general and writing in English, in particular, has the outcome expressed by the learners of interpersonal and intrapersonal development. They believed learning could cause "a change in a person" (Katznelson, Perpignan, & Rubin, 2001). Moreover, they state that this change in a person as "by-product" of writing courses influences the individuals' attitudes and behavior inter- as well as intra-personally in and out of the classroom (Katznelson et al., 2001). The advocates of "by-product" have described the situation that "come out" of continues process of learning (Kolb, 1984). They specify the phenomenon of "changing a person" as a

non-writing outcome of academic writing related to personal and social growth. Reflection in the clinical setting forces students to acknowledge the strengths and limitations in their ability to make decisions concerning patient care (Taylor-Haslip, 2010).

Similarly, Lestander and Engstrom (2016) stated that student nurses wrote about their feeling of security when they share experiences with others. They assert that "the student nurses' self-confidence and esteem was reinforced by hearing that others shared similar experiences concerning the situation." In short, it can be suggested that in any educational settings, reflection could be beneficial in the process of learning. Moreover, many advocates in the field of education believe that the best venue for the cognitive activity of reflection to be envisaged is the reflective texts written after reflection from the workplace (Boud et al. 1985; Chirema, 2007; Milinkovic & Field, 2004; Chapman et al, 2009).

For some student nurses, an assignment of writing a reflection can be simply one more task in order to pass the course, or it can be a window, which opens the student's inner responsiveness to a patient's otherness. The nurse educators have the opportunity to present the usefulness of a reflective assignment as a skill, which brings students face to face with themselves by looking at the face of the other (Binding, Morck, & Moules, .2010). Moreover, toward the increased use of reflective writing in nursing education, in particular, the necessity of monitoring its implementation carries the same level of importance (Coward, 2011; Chirema 2007; Mann et al., 2009).

To conclude the above, the conceptual overview of reflective journal writing was discussed two major concepts pertaining to the objectives of this study. For one,

the concepts of widely reviewed of the role of reflective journal writing in reflective education. And, the roles of the reflective journal writing plays in nursing education, in particular. Nursing is an action-based profession, and student nurses should be aware of their strengths and weakness of their knowledge and practice before and after clinical posting. So, the role of reflective journal writing in the process of self-directed learning was emphasized. Another prominent role of journaling was the awareness toward empowering the learners in the process of to be competent practitioners. Another concept was the development of critical thinking as a result of reflective practice. Another component discussed was the professional identity that is unconsciously developed through reflective journaling. The following section will discuss the student nurses' perception of reflective journal writing.

2.4 Perception on Reflective Journal Writing

Perception is a process of organizing and interpreting the sensory impression in order to make meaning of the events and the environment. As the meaning indicates, perception is an important part of people's life because they behave base on what reality is, not on reality itself. In this regard, factors influencing perception are the perceiver, the situation, and the target. In reality of education, the perceiver is the learners, the situation is the real-life event, and the target is the concept of learning. Learners as a whole person who plays the key role in the reflection and reflective writing activities have received little attention in the literature regarding their perception upon the reflective journal writing.

To have a profound exploration of reflective journal writing in this study, the student nurses' perception on reflective journal writing (RJW) has been reviewed. The concept of perception on reflective journaling was dominantly discussed in the

following domains due to their familiarity with the nature and the objectives of this study. These domains were the a) usefulness and undesirability of RJW, b) barriers and the role of mentors in RJW, and c) the role of RJW in assessing learning outcome.

2.4.1 Usefulness and Undesirability

There are studies that have conducted in a focus of learners' perception in regard to reflection and reflective journaling. In their study, Oldland, Curry, Considine, and Allen (2017) asked learners to write about their perception of team-based learning. Learners stated that through written reflection of their perception, they can shape their learning style, develop their teamwork skills, and improve professional clinical behaviour. That is, team-based learning helps them to develop better communication styles, enhance listening skills, and increase confidence that, in turn, led to the development of clinical and professional characteristics of high-quality nursing practice. Likewise, Lestander et al (2016) found out from the nursing students' perception in their written reflection that they develop reflection over time when they are mature in the profession and can act as a nurse. In other words, reflection helps student nurses to enhance their awareness of their weaknesses and strengths and to normalize their feelings and thoughts as they share experiences with their peers and staff nurses. Moreover, they highlighted the impact of one's mistakes that the students began to understand what is needed to be done to avoid the same mistake in future similar conditions. That way, they appreciate each other's knowledge and the opportunity to discuss the patient's problem with peers before making decisions as a result of good communication (Lestander et al., 2016). Their important finding is that the student nurses realize that reflection on practice can contribute to workplace competency and patient safety.

In the same vein, Oldland et al. (2017) maintained the role of reflection on the student nurses' professional behavior in a workplace for providing high quality and safe patient care. They found out in their study that students reported about their increased confidence acquired through reflection and improved in their clinical knowledge and problem solving and communication skills in clinical environments. A study on investigating the Malaysian students' perception of critical thinking was conducted by Shazaitul and Maisarah in 2015. They concluded that students need to be well prepared to work with other people in a real workplace. With the emphasis on understanding the subject matter in class, the students could advance in thinking process; especially in dealing with the unpredictability of time constrain. Similarly, Hwang, Choi, Kim, Ko, and Kim (2018) have found out that novice student nurses believed that reflective journaling helped them to feel confident to cope in a similar situation by reflecting upon fundamental values essential to nursing practice.

Furthermore, some studies have maintained the usefulness of reflective journal writing in recognizing and expressing the feeling which if not expressed, it may have negative consequences for the novice student nurses. Hwang, et al. (2018, p.163) stated that student nurses perceived reflection as an opportunity to express emotions and to recognize the underlying reasons. In their study, student nurses viewed "critical reflective journaling as more than an assignment, and wrote that they would use critical reflection in their daily lives to improve self-awareness."

Much has been written about the subject of reflection, and many brought attention to issues and challenges concerning its relevance to the learning process, and to professional practice (Coward, 2011; Conte, 2015). Braine (2009) found out from the questionnaire and focus group interview that reflection is a personal and individual mental activity whereas others considered it as a dialogue with others. She

also asserted that reflection is not an easy skill to develop and it is time-consuming. However, she advocated that student nurses need carefully planned strategies to develop the skill of reflection. Besides, she maintained that in case of absence of assessment, the students raised the issue of reason for doing this assignment. If the ability to practice reflectivity is perceived important in the process of professionalism, then the nurse educators must address the issues of how to teach and how students develop this skill.

In conclusion, reflective journaling was perceived by the student nurses as an educational strategy to accelerate their learning requiring high self-awareness and higher-order critical thinking and problem-solving skills. And it enhanced their confidence and communication skills essential to perform safe nursing care. Coward (2011) declared that she is willing to accept reflection as a learning tool; and to maintain two-way road, teachers should use reflective practice as a teaching tool.

2.4.2 Barriers and Mentoring

In the process of learning, it is natural for the learners to face some barriers and challenges. With the negativity that exists around this educational practice, some studies have questioned the validity of this practice for any reason (Rassaei, 2015). For instance, Coward (2011, p.885) has questioned an issue on the assessment requirements of the reflective journaling that 'force' the student nurses to write in order to be academically assessed. She stated that lack of student nurses' preparation for reflection, in fact, prevents them from "seeing the purpose of this methodology." To explore the barriers in reflective practice, literature has identified several barriers in reflective journaling; such as inadequate reflection, and lack of training for students (O'Connell & Dyment, 2011; Chong, 2009); ethical issues and lack of trust (Chirema, 2007; O'Connell & Dyment, 2011; Varagona & Hold, 2019); lack of

productive feedback upon reflective journals (Oldland et al., 2017); evaluation of journal entries (O'Connell & Dyment, 2011). In their study, Oldland et al (2017) have revealed that receiving feedback upon reflection is required for encouraging deep learning and developing confidence which led to the development of professional and high quality of nursing practice.

As for the role of nurse mentors, Shazaitul and Maisarah in 2015 highlighted that the nurse mentors should provide a high quality of assignment to promote students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Braine (2009) pointed out that learners articulate their perception of lack of self-efficacy in teachers in facilitating reflection and recommended strategies to teach reflection. She also concluded that reflection is a process that requires time and experience due to a highly complex and cognitively demanding process. Similarly, Abednia et al., (2013) explored in-service teachers' perception regarding the challenges of reflective journal writing. They concluded that reflective journal writing serves as a dialogue between tutors and students, and they need to show enthusiasm toward students' journals. On the other hand, the learners must be thoughtful to the tutor's comments on these journals because of the effectiveness and meaningfulness of the reflective journals for learning. In this regards, Coward (2011) has pointed out that it is of nurse teachers' responsibility to prepare the students to become reflective on what they know and assist them in applying their knowledge meaningfully to existing situations that they face.

Varagona and Hold (2019) believed that nurse tutors require guidance regarding their choice of words and behavior that affect learners' trust. To gain students' trust and avoid losing their trust, the tutors need to examine their personal trait, words, and behaviors in order to establish a caring student-tutor relationship

built on trust. Likewise, Coward (2011) has a suggestion for mentors to help their learners in reflective writing. She used storytelling and shared reflection as a method for teaching in which she used humor on her own practice. The impact of this method is twofold; one is telling stories can work as a sample for reflective writing, and another one is that humor causes a positive relationship between learners and the tutors.

It can be concluded that the positive academic relationship between mentors and student nurses when 'trust' is the main element is one of the most important factors in the positive learning outcome of reflective journaling (Varagona and Hold, 2019). This situation can also associate with learner's success.

2.4.3 Learning Assessment

To use reflective journals for learning assessment or evaluating student nurses' competence in practicum is open to debate. Benner (1984) stated that competence is an objective concept and can be measured upon the performance of skills. The reflective journal is advocated as an assessment tool that can be evidence of high quality of care and professional competence in practice (McCready, 2007). However, Coward (2011) stated that one of the reasons why the student nurses feel negative about reflective journaling is that it is used as an assessment tool. There are many aspects of nursing practice which the nurse tutor can judge the student nurses' competence and professionalism, but the element of professional trust is another reason why reflection should not be used as an assessment tool.

Additionally, Kim (2013) has pointed out that reflective journals provide more flexible choices in the content and process reflection on learning experiences. This enabled student nurses to ask questions, challenge confusion, and make connections

between concepts and relevant practice. Therefore, it is helpful to clarify what assessment criteria are used to evaluate student performance in reflective journals. In the assessment practice, summative feedback has been commonly utilized in reflective journal writing which some students agree and for some, it causes disappointment (Rassaei,2015). Coward (2013) has alerted the educationalist about the danger of overuse of reflective journal for the sake of assessment. In the same vein, Kim (2013) reiterated that literature of reflective journal assessment has not been fully explored the use of feedback approaches in support of self-directed learning.

To sum up, Coward (2011) believes that using the reflective journal as a method of assessment is a major problem. However, Kim (2013) has asserted that reflective journal is a key assessment tool providing that the cognitive dimension of critical reflection to be emphasized over emotional dimension of reflection and the students receive constructive feedback. She added that assessment through reflective journals should involve individual diversity, their needs, and cognitive development of the students and positive academic relationship between the teacher and learners.

2.5 Reflective Journal Writing Practices among Malaysian Nurses

From the year 1800, the history of nursing was documented in Malaysia when The East India Company established hospitals in Penang and Singapore. At that time, the nursing task was carried out by Catholic nuns and later by English nurses from England. Although the nursing practice emphasized mainly on the curative aspects of patient care, lectures in theory and practice were also given by the English matrons, Sisters, and doctors. Since the nursing training was organized "on-the-job training" the nursing education was carried on by the trainers at the hospital level. These

trained nurses become Staff Nurses and later promoted to become Senior Staff Nurses who would supervise novice nurses and become the head of the wards if considered suitable. Three regional schools of nursing in three hospitals were established before the enactment of the Nurses Act (1950), Hospital Johor Baru (1946), Hospital Pulau Pinang (1947) and Hospital Kuala Lumpur (1948). English tutors headed these three schools of nursing (MOHE, 2010).

Until the time of the formation of the Nursing Board and Nurses Act in 1950, nursing was under full supervision of the United Kingdom. Since then, from the mid-fifties, Malaysian nurses have controlled the nursing education along the same lines as the medical profession. However, the curriculum was based on the British model, taught by British nurses who also established an educational system for the first nurse training school in Malaysia (Khatijah, 2004).

The General Nursing Council (GNC) of the United Kingdom in 1952 introduced the curriculum for nursing education that was comprised of 20% theory and 80% practice for the duration of three years and four months program. The major goal was to enable Malaysian nurses to continue their studies in countries abroad that have reciprocity with England and Wales (MOHE, 2010).

The educational model of the 1950s is still effective in most hospital-based nursing education in Malaysia; that is, teacher-centred training and related content are still the focal points of learning. However, direct and indirect advancement and progress in science and technology have influenced medical and health services in general and nurses, in particular, to move toward the perfection of their expanded and extended roles. With rapid industrial and technological expansion, the changes in nursing services and training advancement seem slow that caused a serious

shortage of professional nurse practitioners. As a result, five local universities offer nurse training at the undergraduate level. Each university developed its own nursing curriculum based on the standards set by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE, 2010).

During clinical practice, the student nurses get familiar with reflection and reflective writing through practice and discussion (Chong, 2009). Subsequently, on their first year, second term, the pre-registered student nurses (PRSN) are instructed to do the reflective journal writing in a session as a tutorial of a course named effective documentation and reporting (Appendix, A). In the two-hour tutorials, the PRSN get familiar with the syllabus consisted of introducing theories of reflection and guidelines pertaining to writing reflective texts. Then, like any other tutorials, a formal exam will be conducted on reflective writing in the second year, second term. The pre-registered student nurses carry out the activity of writing reflective texts during the clinical practice under the lecturers' supervision.

The above discussions mainly exposed a review of literature on reflection and reflective practice. The following section discusses the theoretical perspectives guiding this study.

2.6 Theoretical Perspectives

An important issue in this study is to explore the role of reflective journal writing toward developing professional knowledge and skills initiating enhanced learning among the Malaysian pre-registered student nurses. To give a sound direction, this section will discuss the theoretical perspective that guided this study. There have been theoretical approaches to teaching and learning reflection and reflective practices (for example, Schon, 1984, Kolb, 1984; Gibbs, 1987; Boud et al., 1985;

Mezirow, 1991. 1997, 2000). And there are studies which utilized Mezirow's theory of reflection (Jarvis, 1992; Wong et al.1995; Kember et al. 1999; Moon, 1999; Williams et al. 2002; Chirema, 2007). The common rationale of most of these studies in using this theory was that its components have been endeavor of adult education and nursing education. Accordingly Chirema (2007) used Mezirow's model to identify non-reflectors, reflectors, and critical reflectors among post-registered students in her study. There were several models explored to see their suitability of their frameworks for coding the reflection for this study. To provide rationale for utilizing Mezirow's model, brief explanations were given for each model.

Kolb (1984) created his famous model of experiential learning circle that starts with concrete experience, followed by observation and reflection, then by the formation of abstract concepts and at last by testing in new situations. He reiterates that the learning cycle can begin at any one of the four points. Although it is a ground-breaking model, there are certain issues concerning this study and this model. This main element of this study concerns the exploration of reflective writing among PRSN in the process of reflection and learning. This model does not sufficiently highlight the involvement of learners in reflection and reflective writing. The transformative learning theory proposed by Mezirow (1991) clearly mentioned that individuals experience an unfamiliar situation with disorienting dilemma, which requires reflection on the experience. Moreover, Kolb' model (1984) does not provide an efficient theme and coding schemes for the process of analysing reflective writing; whereas some studies used the concepts of Transformative Learning Theory in order to design coding schemes for their studies namely Kember et al. (1999), Chirema (2007), and Kear (2013). Furthermore, Ludgren and Poell (2016, p.3) reviewed on the empirical studies on critical reflection. They stated that "the

concepts of content, process, and premise levels of reflection have often been cited and operationalizing Mezirow's high-level transformative learning theory."

Gibbs introduced the reflective cycle in 1988, which is dominantly integrated into nursing programmes; the site of this study also includes his cycle of reflection in dealing with reflective practices, because many practitioners have used it and found it to be successful (Burns, Bulman, & Palmer, (2000), cited in Chong, 2009). This model represents full structured stages to facilitate reflection involved in Kolb's 'experiential learning cycle'. The stages contain a question representing a distinct element of description, feeling, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan, which consecutively follow each other. There are similarities between Gibbs' model of reflection with those in the transformative learning proposed by Mezirow. For instance, at the levels of content reflection and process reflection on experience, this model offers similar explanation. However, at the level of premise reflection or critical reflection, Gibbs' model comprises little to offer for the higher level of reflection that is believed to be the crucial elements for lifelong learning. Mezirow believed that the positive outcome of reflection is when the learners experience the new perspectives or experiences changes in behaviour (Ludgren & Poell 2016).

According to Mezirow, the student nurses are adult learners whose expectations of learning can be modified to the degree of changing the world view and meaning perspectives (Kear, 2013). In this regard, Mezirow unlike Schon (1984) believed reflection is not simply reflecting on or in action, that the person stops the activity, thinks about it, makes decisions, solve the problem and at last, plan for the future action. As reflection is a cognitive ability, an individual can understand the experience better if critically questions the content, process, and premise reflection underlying the experience. By doing so, the learners experience higher-order of

conscious thought that would manifest in the change in behaviour and the underlying values, attitudes and beliefs. This can assist them to go forward, to reach the level of personal and professional growth.

On the other hand, Schon' concepts of reflection-in-action can be seen when an individual is expressing within or out of tacit knowledge while experiencing an event. According to Brown and McCartney, 1998, cited in King, 2002, "reflection-in-action is least likely to be referred to in reflective writing." Their indication in this regard supports the idea of Mezirow. He underlined that the learners would not stop and reflect in their task or in their actual practice of what they are doing; rather they focus on the actual task and practice to do it well. This act of reflection-in-action is a prelude for other form of reflection that appears in the reflective journals. Therefore, for the students doing technical work, other forms of reflection, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action will form the basis of their reflective writing (King, 2002, p. 4).

In her study with post-registered nursing students, Chirema (2007) used Boud et al. (1985) model of personal growth (i.e. affective domain) and Mezirow's model. She states that categorizing the student nurses into non-reflector, reflector, and critical reflector was possible to provide a useful insight for further assessing the reliability and developing principles. However, within Boud et al. (1985) model, she reiterates that identifying the textual elements is difficult and less reliable (Chirema, 2007). In qualitative data analyses of the reflective writing, the unit of analysis is a sentence or a phrase in the reflective journal entries. Therefore, in congruence with other studies (Plack and Greenberg, 2005; Thorpe, 2004; Kember et al.1999) this study will use three levels of reflection of content, process, and premise reflection

along with the categorization of non-reflector, reflector, and critical reflector for the participants to achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions.

With that brief explanation, however, Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) devised by Mezirow (1991) has guided this study. Mezirow believes that adult learners have a better understanding of their personal, social, and cultural backgrounds, so they have the ability to modify their assumptions, beliefs, and potentials of learning. For him, these learners experience a change in their views of their surroundings and the world that is called a change in one's perspective. This change in perspective is considered an expected outcome that discriminates the individuals who construct knowledge through critical reflection on the content, process, and premise of an experience (Kreber & Cranton, 2000; Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 2000). According to Mezirow, transformative learning occurs when the result of these three levels of reflection forms a new frame of reference to make meaning from the experience more understandable (Mezirow, 1990, 1997, p. 25). Likewise, Herod (2002) stated that transformative learning or (TL) is "learning to purposively question one's own assumptions, beliefs, feelings, and perspectives in order to grow or mature personally and intellectually." A brief explanation on TLT, a description on how the process of transformation occurs, will enlighten the perspectives on transformative learning theory (TLT) suggested by Mezirow.

Mezirow (1981) proposes ten phases for TLT, starting with disorienting dilemma in phase 1, when the learners reflect on their own experience. The learners experience self-examination, a critical assessment of assumption, negotiate a similar change with others, acquire knowledge to plan a new action, build competence and self-confidence. Finally, upon completions of these 10 phases, the learners will experience a transformation in their beliefs, assumptions, and values into new

meaning perspectives. Transformative learning has roots in the concepts of the theory of communicative action proposed by Habermas (1984). He points out that the concepts of different knowledge, instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory will assist learners to move forward to the level of self-directed learning. The learners will move toward emancipatory domain if they involve themselves with content, process, and premise reflection in their life (Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1991).

In this study, transformative learning theory provides a framework to explore the reflective writing among the pre-registered student nurses. Individuals in the health care profession, particularly nursing, are continually faced with unexpected issues in the practice. In such a situation, according to Schon's (1987) term, they must stop, think and solve the problem, that is they reflect-in-action. In addition, after each interaction with the patient or family, they may reflect on what can be done to improve the patient's condition. Schon refers to this as reflection-on-action that is revisiting the experiences and analysing the situation. Moreover, Plack and Greenberg, (2005) cited a study by Killion and Todnem (1991) that broadened Schon's concepts to reflection-for-action. They indicate that this anticipation makes the minds of an individual, either novice or expert, prepare for suitable action and quality care. The skills of reflection in/on/for action are essential to competent health care personnel and must be learned by novice through the course of study (Plack & Greenberg, 2005).

2.6.1 Mezirow's Typology of Reflection

In the process of examining the effects of reflective journal writing in the course of developing professional knowledge and skills, it seems a necessity to explore the typology of reflection. The literature of reflection in general and

reflective writing, in particular, has accentuated the requirement of reflective activities for the nursing profession. However, it seems there is a need for further research on reflective journal writing to introduce a well-structured framework. The most significant element of transformative learning is the importance of the strategies that adults use to make meaning from their experience and validate their decisions to be autonomous thinkers. According to Mezirow (2000), when adults are able to think for themselves, able to trust themselves, they can build confidence; then, they experience self-empowerment that is the heart of adult education. The transformative learning theory proposed by Mezirow (1991) views educators as adult learners. He, thus, highlights that it is through three levels of content, process, and premise reflection that knowledge is constructed.

A variety of disciplines such as education, psychology, business, sociology, science and health care have benefited by using Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) and strategies. Patricia, King, Taylor, and John Dirxk are other researchers and educationalists who are experts to work on TLT in the discipline of education. In 1978, Mezirow proposed what is known as the theory of reflectivity in Europe, or transformative learning theory in the United States. Under the influence of Habermasian critical theory, Mezirow has made his interpretation and developed his ideas in books and articles on the theory of transformative learning fundamentally in the field of adult education (Wong & King, 2006). However, Kuhn's (1962) paradigm, Freire's (1970) conscientization, and Habermas's (1971, 1984) have influences on the Mezirow's early theory of transformative learning (Kitchenham, 2008).

Mezirow (1991) believed that reflection is more than just thinking back on the action; in fact, he built his reflection terminology on the beliefs that interpretations

and meaning upon experiences and prior knowledge can be valued if they are critically examined and assessed through the content, process, and premises reflections. These terms were used when Mezirow elaborated in great detail on Dewey's definition of reflection. Moreover, His concepts of content, process, and premise levels of reflection can determine whether the students are non-reflector, reflector, and critical reflector. These classifications by which the students can be placed are according to the evidence demonstrated in their reflective journal entries and efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience.

Mezirow (1997) stated transformative learning theory always has a disorienting dilemma as point of departure. Through the first phase of a disorienting dilemma, the learners' experience crisis and confusion that leads to the accumulation of meaning schemes over time. The learners who are aware of these conditions would go through the stages of trial and error to make the meaning out of their confusion, which later leads them toward transformative learning (Tsao et al, 2006). Therefore, content reflection is an assessment level when the learner examines a problem and describes the situation at the surface level. At the psychological level, the learners try to answer the "what" of their assumptions. Therefore, the same learners, at the sociolinguistic level, may ask, "What are the norms?", and at the epistemic level may ask," What knowledge do I have?" A whole person, who is psychologically and socio-linguistically well developed, is a student who only described the experience and explained the event (at content level) is defined as a non-reflector (Cranton, 1996).

Therefore, when PRSN witnesses a performance for the first time, or they are assigned to perform certain nursing tasks for the first time; they are experiencing the level of content reflection. That is, they must look back to the classroom instructions or their time in the simulation lab and relate the theoretical knowledge provided to

them to the practical knowledge and experience they receive in the clinical posting. For example, the student nurses have been taught how to take vital signs, how to change dressing using aseptic techniques. Knowing this is the examples derive from the level of content reflection upon a new situation.

On the other hand, a reflector learner is the one who has paid more attention to the new knowledge and experience from the current event and can relate and adjust the previous knowledge and skills with the present new ones. That is, the learners have acquired the ability to find the relationship between these two stages of knowledge. At the process level of reflection the learners involves in verifying and assessing the problem and can question the problem itself. At the psychological level, the learners try to answer "how" of their hypothesis. Hence, at the sociolinguistic level, the learners may ask, "How do these norms work for me?", and at the epistemic level, the question is "How did I obtain this knowledge?" Ludgren and Poell (2016) pointed out that reflective process could be started at the level of content and process reflection. They recapped that emancipatory learning is the result of reflection at this level. Accordingly, at the level of process reflection, PRSN may contemplate about how these nursing tasks are being implemented by more knowledgeable bodies like staff nurses or when they are supervised by them. When they are performing nursing tasks; in fact, they are actively participating in the process of learning. Mezirow believes that, at this level, when the learners know how to do the task; and realize how well that task was done by other members of the health community; they are at the level of process reflection reaching the critical thinking level.

Furthermore, at the level of premise reflection, learners inquire about the rationale of a nursing task. At this level, learners with their practical knowledge view

the purpose of those particular nursing tasks and try to understand how these nursing activities are fit together. At this level, Mezirow reiterates that learning has occurs because it was assisted by higher-order thinking. It is the critical reflector who has achieved the highest levels of reflection by being able to continually reflect upon their experience and skills to reach the stage that enables the individual to solve the problem and make decisions and make learning part of his/her own (Jasper, 1999; Plack & Greenberg, 2005). Furthermore, premise reflection occurs when the learners questions the problem itself. At the psychological level, the question of "why should I ask these questions?" occupies the learners' mind. At sociolinguistic level, the learners try to answer the question on "why are these elements important?", and at epistemic level, the question of "Why do I need this knowledge? Mezirow repeatedly emphasizes the premise reflection by saying, "premise reflection is dynamic by which our belief systems-meaning perspective- become transformed" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 111).

As a guide, Mezirow's (1991) work was used in this study; which was previously used, among many, by Wong et al. (1997), Kember et al. (1999), Thorpe (2004), and Chirema (2007). According to transformative learning, through the process of learning, the critical awareness of one's tacit knowledge or experience helps the individual in meaning-making that enlightens the path for future conducts. Mezirow (1996) asserted that this theory considers the process of learning by using the prior experience and interpretation to construe a new knowledge for another accomplishment. This idea implies that not every adult individual can be fully assured of their tacit knowledge. Therefore, developing critical insights can assist individuals to understand the world better (Taylor, 2008).

The classifications of content, process and premise levels of reflection are useful to put the pre-registered student nurses in the categories associated with their levels of reflection. The ability of reflection upon the incidence that the learners experienced in the clinical setting can be detected in the reflective journal writing. Concerning the above discussion, transformative learning theory proposed by Mezirow (1991) appears the most suitable theoretical framework to explore the reflective journal writing among the Malaysian pre-registered student nurses.

2.6.2 Major Operationalization of Reflection

Transformative learning theory (TLT) as a cognitive adult learning theory defined by Mezirow (1991), served as the theoretical framework for this research study to answer the research questions. Hence, the research objectives and research questions that formulated to explore the importance of reflection and reflective journal writing is discussed from the perspectives driven from (TLT).

Mezirow believed that adults have attained a consistent body of experience, concepts, values, feelings that define their life. The paradigms that we understand our experience are our frames of reference. The frames of reference are sets of assumptions that shape the individuals' expectations, perceptions, beliefs, and feelings with which they act and function. Hence, the frames of reference can be considered inclusive to the individuals, which draw lines between them when they accept or reject the ideas according to their frames of references. In this study, the attempt is to find out how the participants with their frame of reference could react in the clinical environment.

The cognitive and emotional concepts of a frame of reference include habits of mind and a point of view. The habits of mind represent the ways of thinking, feeling,

and acting upon a set of behavior, while points of view are regarded as the feeling, beliefs, and assumptions towards particular individuals (Mezirow, 1997). Likewise, McAllister (2012) stated that "transformative learning theory helps to problematize such habits of mind and stimulates awareness of other ways of knowing" (p.43). In this regard, some concepts of life such as the culture, idiosyncrasies of the social networks, and others' assumptions would influence the individuals' frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997). Our frames of references can be transformed through critical reflection upon any incidence and events particularly at the time of decision making and solving a problem. As addressed by Taylor (2008), the perspective transformation would make adjustments or changes in frames of reference along with reflection on prior knowledge. In these procedures, critical reflection can cause transformation in habits of mind and points of view that lead to the transformation of frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997, p.7). Therefore, the frames of reference are subject to change due to growing distortion in meaning schemes or to a series of severe personal and social calamities (Taylor, 2008, p.6). Accordingly, through these phases, the learners have made changes in their assumptions, beliefs, and values and then, welcomed a new meaningful perspective that makes the individuals ready to learn from the world around (Tsao et al, 2006). In the following section, the concept of meaning-making is discussed in more details.

2.6.2.1 Dimensions of Meaning Making

Transformational learning maintains its focus on the whole individual which includes emotions, relationship, intellect, and physical well-being (Mezirow, 2000). One of the individual features is the meaning-making. Meaning-making is a notion when a person tries to make sense or make an interpretation of an experience guiding actions, making decisions, and solving problem. This meaning-making from

an experience subsequently becomes 'learning' when helps the individuals understand the present situation to guide them for future action (Mezirow, 1990). In an elaboration of the concept of meaning-making, McAllister (2012) pointed out that if questioning and contemplation are encouraged, the student nurses may be able to move beyond an understanding of the new situation and move toward the attainment of new visions that facilitate empowered action. These new visions and insights could be within themselves, peers, or community of medical professionals. It is in support of the idea that disorienting dilemmas can become a trigger for deep learning if a support system is available.

Based on Habermas's ideas, Mezirow introduces three types of learning-technical, practical, and emancipatory (Kitchenham, 2008). That is, learning at the level of technical is mainly instrumental; when the learners ask about the best way to learn. The other type of learning is practical; when the learners reach other sources to find out when and where this learning could be used. And the learning becomes emancipatory when the learners are more self-reflective and wants to know why they are learning such information (Kitchenham, 2008). In the process of developing professional knowledge and skills, the ability of meaning- making is an essential skill for beginning the clinical practice of student nurses. The concept of taking action offers important insights as nursing is an inherently action-based profession. However, according to Mezirow (2000), it is not all action that leads to learning and advances transformative learning, only that action that encourages the learners to reflect and brings them out of the predicaments of the situation. In fact, instrumental learning involves the process of learning to control the situation and other people to see how the effort ends in convincing the results of problem-solving.

In the process of problem-solving, Mezirow believes that not all learning involves problem-solving or pertains to action. Some learning, in fact, involves understanding what others communicate; communicative learning involves when individuals engage in others' values, beliefs, and feelings. Then, the learning occurs when the individuals communicate to understand what others' have meant through writing, speech or drama. Communicative or dialogic learning approach necessitates exploring ideas and thoughts to interpret the unknown into known domains or the meaning perspective. McAllister (2012) stated that "establishing an environment of reflective discourse" is vital so that the learners are encouraged to reflect on the actions.

Interpreting the unfamiliar condition through dialogic communication is the approach to construe meaning and solve problems; however, learning requires establishing and validating the knowledge, without which the learning is not justified. In everyday situation, individuals engage in reflection in general and self-reflection in particular to "bracket prior judgment and biases to review the evidence and arguments critically for meaning justification of ideas and thoughts underlying any kinds of discourse" (Mezirow, 1990, p.3).

The process of meaning-making is action-oriented. Freire (1972) believed that achieving empowerment among student nurses requires that they need to think deeply before taking action. This comes through reflective learning that thinking is bound to act. Mezirow (2000) coined it "critical reflection"; that is not natural among all students. To be well-executed, critical reflection must be learned. Learning how to reflect, the students are required to be aware of different levels of reflection; content, process, and premises. In other words, Merriam (2004) stated that learning to be a critical thinker and reflect critically requires a mature mind and mature

cognitive skill. Thus, the learners must be assisted to understand the differences between reflections and learning; guide the learners to disclose the implicit and hidden thoughts and actions and make meaning of them and made them explicit. If the learners come to this maturity, this type of learning is self-directed and emancipatory.

The purpose of critical thinking has been extensively debated by researchers, educators, and theorists. The notion of critical reflection has been associated with improved thinking, learning and self-awareness. According to Mezirow (1981), critical reflection is a way of examining our own thoughts about which we are, what our identity and beliefs are and so on. The broader sociological notion of reflective knowing is critical thinking that can occur beyond established social processes. Habermas (1978, p.42) called it "critical reflective knowing" that criticizes our knowledge and beyond. In this regard, Schon (1991) suggested that teachers who adopt critical reflection have the ability to connect with students' thoughts and feelings about the subject matter and the topic at hand. Then, students can build a bridge to connect different knowledge and can take control of their learning. Therefore, reflection as a teaching strategy can promote critical thinking and potentially facilitates the production and use of new knowledge in practice.

2.6.2.2 Dimensions of Decision Making

In situations of rapid changes in the workplace, particularly in health centers, the student nurses need to think as an independent and responsible person to make sound decisions in this type of situations. Thus, the student nurses should be able to identify the learning needs of the workplace and to recognize the significance of self-directed learning (Mezirow, 1997). Moreover, he maintained that a self-

sufficient learner is empowered, productive and responsible who can act critically upon received ideas and show judgments towards others. He believes that the necessary disposition to engage in decision making is to be critically reflective.

In regards to competency, an important strategy for student nurses, who embrace lifelong learning, is a reflective practice associated with learning from experience. Taking actions out of habitualisation and automation always have been a concern in nursing education. The primary impact of habitual act is the risk of dehumanizing patients and their needs (Chirema, 2007; McAllister, 2012). Thus, effective reflection helps the nurses carefully plan their actions and consciously control it to ensure it is beneficial to their patient. Taking appropriate action is part of the process of reflection; so, the value of effective reflection can be realized when the learners are able to take action and make decisions. In Mezirow's words "the adult educator must recognize both the learner's objectives and goal; the objective is to function more autonomously and responsible learner" (Mezirow, 1997, p.8). This ability can be promoted with mentors' feedback and support. Feedback coming from nurse mentors, both verbal and non-verbal, is a way of promoting the development of qualified and self-directed learners. In line with this idea, Bandura (1986) maintained that, learners appropriately adjust their thoughts and behavior. This altered behavior is the result of self-reflection on identifying positive as well as negative aspects of nursing tasks. Reflection at this level is viewed as improving professional competence.

2.6.2.3 Development of Reflective Reasoning

As we live in a complicated and ever-changing world, having an ability to reason reflectively and think critically is a lifelong necessity to help us make

complicated choices in our social, academic, and personal lives. In fact, many educationalists consider critical reflection or critical reasoning as a fundamental goal of learning in higher education (Schon, 1984; Dewey, 1933; Cranton, 1996; Merriam, 2004). Tanner's (2006, p. 205) Clinical Judgment Model (CJM) is the best framework for the Guide for Reflection. In her model, Tanner (2006) maintained that "clinical judgments often "are more influenced by what the nurse brings to the situation than the objective data at hand." The student nurses should have an awareness of their own knowledge and experience and how these affect their thinking about a patient's situation and their performance to care for the patient as novice student nurses. Reflection provides an excellent way for student nurses to evaluate their level of knowledge and develop their ability to make clinical judgments. So, we can conclude that reflection is in the heart of reasoning and clinical judgment.

Likewise, it can be concluded that critical thinking or reflection in the context of higher education would provide new answers to questions, which may not be cleared with traditional methods. Through reflection, however, learners are challenged with their old knowledge and beliefs, with learning from the new experience, and with the development of critical thinking. These challenges could assist the learners to connect theory with practice and progress in their learning through identifying their learning needs (Schon, 1985; Chirema, 2007; Azer, 2008; Jasper, 1999; Kear, 2013). Similarly, Boud et al. (1985b, p. 45) stated, "reflection in the context of learning is a generic term for those intellectual and affective abilities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations."

Moreover, according to the TLT, learners' prior assumptions and experiences would be deconstructed through engaging in critical reflection, which subsequently, leads to a goal of transformation of meaning perspective (Mezirow, 1991). He also asserts that critical reflection causes awareness within the individuals about the assumptions that constrain the way they perceive, understand, and feel about the world. Then, the changes occur in the learners' perspectives that make the learners act upon the new understanding, which transforms the learners' epistemic, sociolinguistic, and psychological being into new learners (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167).

Reflection has been presented as a deliberate and dynamic process of thinking (Asselin, 2011). She maintained that through reflective reasoning, learners are able to explore course content in their own perspective and to practice it within the context of new knowledge. That is, within the context of new knowledge, reflection can facilitate development of new perceptions and change in attitude to practice among registered nurse students. She also reiterated that to promote competence among students, tutors must be knowledgeable of and skilled in reflection to play the role of a guide and a coach to direct their learners toward more productive reflective reasoning. Consequently, Tanner (2006) concluded that with guided reflective practice, the novice student nurses would experience valuable learning, improved clinical thinking, and enhanced communication about clinical judgement and reasoning.

2.6.3 The Matrix of Importance-Performance Analysis

The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) matrix was first used in the field of marketing by Martilla and James in 1977. The popularity of this matrix goes back to when research revealed about consumer satisfaction of a product as a result of

"perceived importance and performance related to a list of attributes" (Martilla & James, 1977). The matrix of IPA was implemented by them when they examined clients' satisfaction related to services they received for their automobiles. Throughout the years past, the IPA has been applied and modified in a variety of research settings including for example, banking (Joseph, McClure, & Joseph, 1999), dental care services (Nitse & Bush, 1994), adult education (Alberty & Mihalik, 1989), healthcare (Abalo, Varela, & Manzano, 2007) and many more. Clearly, IPA has been utilized by many disciplines in many research settings; yet, little has been known about it to be used in reflective practices with Malaysian pre-registered student nurses.

Martilla and James (1977) suggested four steps in conducting an IPA which is a two-dimensional scale of interpreting importance and performance data in four quadrants. Their suggestion was illustrated in the following Figure 2.1 which was utilized by Razpotnik and Švab (2014). Many studies in several fields have used Importance-Performance Analysis as an evaluative technique. These studies are including but not limited to student evaluation of teaching (Overall & Marsh, 1982), instructional effectiveness in adult education (Alberty & Mihalik, 1989), geriatric nursing and programming (Gillespie, Kennedy, and Soble, 1989), and college student services (Chapman, 1993). The explanation by Martilla and James (1977) is quite straightforward. They stated each quadrant as below:
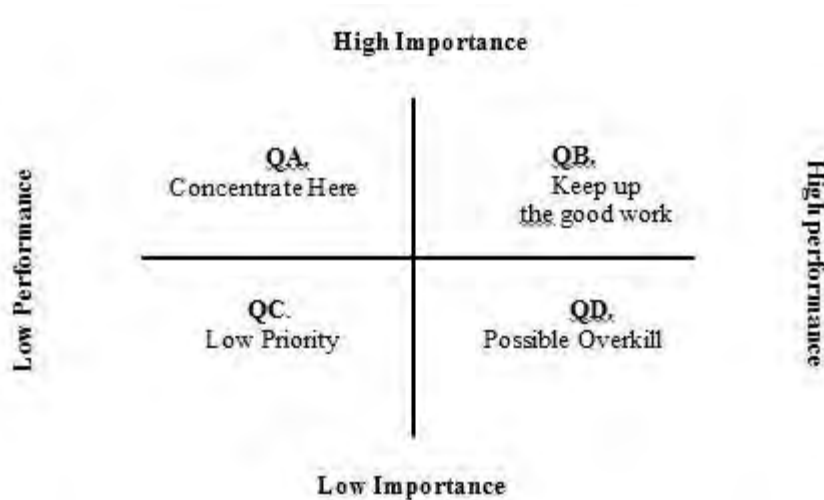
Figure 2.1. Importance-Performance Analysis Matrix

QA. First quadrant: Concentrate here, where the high importance and low performance meet. This quadrant is the most critical classification as underperformance requires immediate attention as represents major weaknesses and threats to performing competitively. The factors must be identified to take action toward possible change in policy, and strategies. Because the attributes that carry high priority are considered to be underperforming. Many scholars in the field of IPA believe that this quadrant represents the most critical classification of the activity in hand.

QB. Second quadrant: Keep up with the good work, where the high importance and high performance meet in one quarter. The attributions within this quadrant are indicative of a standard performance where the major strengths should be maintained. This quadrant, 'keep up with the good work', represents strengths and advantage that should be maintained for the activity. Sever (2015, p.44) stated that "the attributes situated in this quadrant are considered to be performing well and need continued investments." It also indicates that the sources are being effectively

allocated and used where they are needed. Thus, the current approaches and strategies should be continued and enhanced.

QC. Third quadrant: Low priority, where the low importance and low-performance attributes meet each other. That is, the attributes are not performed exceptionally well, and they are considered to be relatively unimportant to learners. Attributes in this quadrant do not require immediate action as it denotes no threat and represents minor weaknesses. Azzopardi and Nash (2013) stated that these attributes attract low priority and decision-makers can ascertain the losing out completely on resources and effort. That is if no importance placed on that attribute, extra effort to improve performance is unnecessary.

QD. Fourth quadrant: Possible overkill, where low importance and high-performance attributes meet each other. The attributes in this quadrant are suggestive of over-performance when no improvement can be detected in the learners' performance. That signifies inefficient use of resources due to the lowest priority for improvement; the appropriate effort should be diverted to other more required areas. In this case, strategies to release resources and effort seem appropriate to be diverted in other required areas.

According to these quadrants, Martilla and James (1977) maintained that by using IPA, the researcher could critically determine what attribute to measure. They indicate that if evaluative factors of 'important' to the learners are unnoticed, the usefulness of IPA become severely limited. In order to tackle this problem, they suggest that by developing various qualitative research techniques, such as semi-structured individual and focused group interviews are useful in identifying potentially important factors. Other suggestion by them indicates that the researcher

is better to "separate the importance measure with the performance measure" (Martilla & James, 1977, p.79). By grouping the questions related to importance and performance measures, there would be a natural progression from general to more specific questions. Thus, analyzing the importance and performance become more systematic. Having known that, positioning the vertical and horizontal axes is a matter of judgment; that is, the identification of what attribute falls in importance and which one to performance axis is totally relative rather than absolute. However, Martilla and James (1977) underlined that a five -or seven-point scale would yield a good spread of ratings; which the middle position would be the useful division. However, due to a limited number of participants in this study, a questionnaire of three scores of Likert scale were used to examine the perception of the pre-registered student nurses on reflective journal writing.

The IPA matrix shed the light on the need for developing strategies in making decisions about the reflective practice as well as to see where the participants place their attributes of importance and performance of reflection in the process of learning and gaining professional knowledge and skills. In accordance with this, the findings of the first research question can contribute to the field of reflective practices. That is, IPA could offer advantages for evaluating the participants' perception of reflective practice in the nursing program. Moreover, according to Razpotnik and Švab (2014), IPA is useful, simple and adaptable tool with which they could identify the potential weaknesses and possible improvement factors in the participants in their study.

Some academics might question the appropriateness of IPA in the field of journal writing. One of the purposes of referencing the IPA analysis in this research was to measure the participants' perception of the concept of 'importance' and 'performance' of reflective journal writing in their nursing curriculum. This means,

how the participants placed the criterion of importance and then their performance of RJW in the process of gaining professional knowledge and skills. Pan (2015) stated that IPA helps researchers find out what factors are important and what factors impact the performance from the participants' perspective in his study.

Another key reason to use Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) matrix for part of this study, however, was that the IPA matrix is easy to understand, apply and implement as the purpose of this study is to develop strong ground on making decisions on reflective journaling practice among the participants. The ease of application is quoted as its major contribution in most studies mentioned already in this study. As a popular technique to administer as well as interpret the result, it is suitable for this study as it can determine the areas in which the participants belong to in case of their perceptions on different attributes pertaining to reflective journal writing.

Although the technique has gained widespread acceptance across many fields, Azzopardi and Nash raised attentions and critically evaluate IPA in 2013. They concluded that more studies are required to establish a multidimensional concept of 'importance'. They advised the use of direct 'importance' measurement against potential biases of self-reported measures.

In the light of the important role of reflective practice in the process of improving professional knowledge and skills and the potential impact on the micro, meso and macro levels in terms of quality of reflection, it could be argued that additional exploratory research in this area seemed necessary. Thus, this study utilized Importance-Performance Analysis as an evaluative research technique to

investigate participants' perceptions of the use of RJW and its role in developing their professional insights and knowledge.

2.7 Summary of the Discussions in Chapter Two

This chapter overviewed two major concepts of reflection and reflective journal writing (RJW) pertaining to clinical, professional and personal knowledge among Pre-Registered Student Nurses (PRSN). Reflection is a complex cognitive phenomenon that comprises active and thoughtful inquiry of experience. Accordingly, the reflective practitioner contemplates over his/her experience, tacit knowledge, and values to understand and interpret the current situation. This understanding can be achieved only through a thoughtful analysis and evaluation of both individual and collaborative factors. The reflective thinking process represents self-empowerment that signifies a change in a person. On the other hand, reflective journal writing provides significant opportunities for nurses to explore their understanding and insights regarding their tacit knowledge, prior experience, values, and beliefs pertaining to the new situation or new condition that initiated the reflection. This educational activity in nursing education requires thinking and reflection upon an event or an experience in a clinical setting. In doing so, they demonstrate their ability of different levels of content, process and premise reflection on the clinical experience in the form of reflective writing. These levels of reflection provided significant accounts of Transformative Learning Theory proposed by Mezirow (1990), the part that he distinguished the learners based on their ability to reflect as to be non-reflector, reflector, or critical reflector. Further, identifying these levels of reflection can highlight the ability to reflect on a higher level of thinking and write more reflectively (Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Kreber &Cranton, 2000; McAllister, 2012).

The review of literature was continued by highlighting the concept of learners' perception of the educational role of reflective journal writing in developing empowerment through awareness, critical thinking, meaning-making and change in meaning perspective. To gain more powerful findings for the survey of the participants' perception, the concept of Importance and Performance Analysis matrix was introduced to evaluate the results of the survey to enlighten the path for the educationalist to make sound decisions on the practice of reflective journal writing mong Malaysian pre-registered student nurse.

The following chapter will explore the domains of methodology and pertaining details concerning the objectives and the techniques in answering the research questions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study aims at exploring reflective journal writing among pre-registered student nurses in a Malaysian context. For this purpose, the focus of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive description of the methodology. Hence, it underlines the implementation of the overall research design and the procedures and methods of data collection and data analysis. Moreover, the importance of trustworthiness in order to establish the reliability of the findings is discussed in detail. The chapter concludes with the summary after the discussion on the limitation of the study.

3.2 Research Design

Through the lens of qualitative interpretive research design, the case of reflective journal writing was investigated through qualitative and quantitative data collection and instruments utilized to serve the purpose of this study. A case study, according to Stake (1995), is a type of research that focuses on a program, activity, or event involving individuals. Whereas Creswell (2012) states that the researcher prefers to describe the activities among a group not detecting patterns shared among that given group. Yin (2008) points out that "case" is an in-debt exploration of an actual activity based on extensive data collection. According to Yin (2012), for this type of study, case studies are preferred when the research questions are descriptive that starts with "what", and explanatory when starts with "how". Another reason for adopting a case study is emphasizing on a phenomenon of reflective journal writing in its real-world context. Merriam (1998) believes "case" is a procedure of inquiry. In this study, "case" is an exploration of the reflective journal writing as a single activity that

involves multiple methods of in-depth inquiry. Therefore, the "case" of reflective journal writing was investigated in its real context through inquiry of the participants' perception, interviews, and document analysis.

Participants' perceptions of reflective journal writing in the process of professional development were studied through a structured survey questionnaire (adopted from Cheng, 2009). Their interviews (focus group and one-on-one interviews) were used to study their ideas about the effectiveness of reflective journaling in the process of developing professional knowledge and skills. Moreover, their reflective journal entries were used to study the participants' levels of reflection.

The literature in research methodology has not yet introduced a universal description for educational research; thus, educational research is considered research into educational matters (McMillan & Schumacher (2005); cited in Ponce & Pagan-Maldonado, 2015). They shared their opinion by asserting that the complexity of educational phenomena can be effectively captured by both quantitative and qualitative research paradigm (Ponce & Pagan-Maldonado, 2015). Therefore, quantitative data collection and instruments can be used to measure the participants' perceptions and to determine the value of the educational activity such as reflective journaling. In addition, the qualitative method of data collection and analysis could capture the context of the educational activity of reflective journaling and the humane and social aspects behind it.

An intentionally combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection and analysis could guide the researcher into the complexity of the research problems of the study. Thus, more robust research and a strong supporting data can

be produced by using this combination in data analysis and formulating the findings (Ponce & Pagan-Maldonado, 2015; Creswell 2012). Likewise, Miles and Huberman (1994, p.42) asserted that qualitative data, such as transcription of the interviews which are the actual words of participants in the study, provide many perspectives on the topic and offer a complex picture of the situation; this, then with a combination of quantitative data, "we have a very powerful mix." In the same respect, the qualitative data can be supported by the quantitative data in this study. Patton (1987) clearly stated that borrowing and combining parts from methodological strategies in collecting and analyzing data is an approach to increase the methodological power of the study.

In order to gain a deep understanding of certain phenomena in the framework of the case study design, the researcher placed more emphasis on the qualitative type of data collection than the quantitative type of data collection. That is, the qualitative data collection process was more in-depth; there were two types of interviews (focus group and one-on-one) which were transcribed and analyzed thoroughly besides a detailed analysis of over 150 pages of reflective journal entries. The qualitative data, from interviews and journals entries, were undergone detailed multiple-layered thematic analysis to provide answers to the second and the third research questions.

In addition, as far as the quantitative data collection concerns, a structured survey questionnaire was adopted and developed to fit the objectives of the study. This quantitative mood of research was incorporated into the qualitative research mood of the study in order to describe the participants' perception of reflective journal writing activity in the process of professional development. The survey questionnaire was adopted from a study conducted by Mei Cheng in 2009 at

University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC). Subsequently, in regard to the approach, the qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed separately due to the two data sets representing different research questions.

3.3 Research Site

This study has been conducted in one of the schools in the College of Health Science affiliated with one of the major public universities in Malaysia. The students from different backgrounds can attend this college after their secondary education. This Health Science College is composed of many other educational programs related to the medical field, such as Radiology, Medical Lab Technology, and Diploma School of Nursing. Each program is managed separately and headed by a highly-educated person with related educational background. This college follows the particulars according to managerial policies given by the state university. This state university has its own curricular framework according to the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE, 2010).

The Diploma School of Nursing program (*Program Diploma Kejururawatan*) is a part of a larger establishment of The College of Health Sciences (*Kolej Sains Kesihatan*) under the University Malaya Medical Centre (*Pusat Perubatan Universiti Malaya, PPUM*), which is located on the second floor of a newly built high building for Research and Development (*Wisma R & D*), which is close to the public university of University Malaya under which most of the administration policies and management are directed.

3.3.1 The Process of Entering into the Site

Entering an academic establishment for the purpose of conducting a research requires an official permission from an authority or a person in charge. In this respect, the researcher inquired information about how to get access into the building. Thus, through an email, the researcher had made an appointment to meet the Head of the College. Upon arrival on the first day, the researcher was guided to the office of the Head of the College of Health Sciences. After a brief introduction and explanation about this study, the principal briefly explained the hierarchy of college and required a letter of permission from the ethics committee and a written statement about the research requirements regarding data collection procedures of the School of Nursing. Through email, the letter from the Medical Ethics Committee, a brief explanation about the subject area and a list of requirements was sent to the Head of the College of Health Science. When all the required documents were provided, the permission was granted, and the researcher met the course coordinator.

The researcher met the course coordinator of the nursing program in her office. Following a brief explanation by the researcher about the nature of the study, she provided a list of 30 pre-registered student nurses who were in their second term of their second year of their study. She stated that this group of student nurses had received formal instruction and sufficient practice on reflective journal writing for their clinical practice requirements. Then, she recommended the place and time which suited the student the most. According to her, a room in the hospital close to the student hostel is the most suitable place for all the student nurses. She, then, assisted the researcher to inform the students for the first meeting on the date proper for everyone in the room in the hospital arranged for this type of meeting. On that

certain day, the researcher made proper arrangements to meet the student nurses for further activity regarding data collection.

3.3.2 The Sites to Collect Data

The first meeting was held in a large room located in the middle of an open corridor connected to the university hospital by a long passageway. A food canteen was at the end of the corridor easy to reach for the convenience of the students. The room was spacious with two large windows facing an open corridor connecting a passageway to the university hospital from one end and to the student hostel the other end. The area was guarded by two lady security guards. In the room, there were a sufficient number of chairs and tables and a portable whiteboard. It was an airy room, yet it was equipped with Air-con and a ceiling fan being used when there were educational activities was being in progress.

On the respective day, the researcher arrived early to prepare the room for the first meeting. She was accompanied by her friend, an educated Malaysian lady who could play a role of a translator in case of any difficulty in communication arose, and also she helped the researcher to prepare the table of refreshment. Another purpose of having a local companion was the researcher's concern about the students. Being accompanied by a local lady can provide a positive atmosphere and the student nurses would feel more at ease and less reluctant to talk.

3.4 Participants for the Quantitative Part of the Research

All the 30 student nurses attended the meeting on the precise time. They arrived in a group of two or three. When all of them arrived and placed themselves in the room, the researcher greeted them with a pleasant face; then she introduced her friend and

herself and asked them to introduce themselves with a short account of their personal and academic background. The purpose was for the researcher to know them better personally, emotionally and academically. After this brief period of introduction, the researcher explained the research procedures and her expectations of them; and then, the time for the next meeting for the focus group interview was arranged and it was announced whoever would like to attend the group discussion were welcomed on the scheduled time and place. Since this first meeting was regarded as an introductory session, the researcher has tried to keep the environment as friendly as possible. The fellowship has lasted for about 67 minutes of individual introduction; then, the refreshment was served, and some pictures were taken before they left the room to the student hostel.

The student nurses who participated in this study had been selected purposefully from a group of the second year, second term pre-registered student nurses who had started the diploma of the nursing program immediately after high school a year prior to the selection for this study. The student participants were selected by the designated coordinators and recruited by the researcher as required. No attempt was made to control participants' gender, age or prior learning experience, there was homogeneity among them; all in their second year of nursing, and all in their early twenties, and except four males the rest were female.

The researcher arranged a meeting with the course coordinator of the Diploma of Nursing in her office in the University Hospital to obtain more about the participants. She was the one who was more familiar with the students than anybody due to the nature of her academic position. In our meeting, the course coordinator pointed out that pre-registered student nurses have many practices on reflection throughout their three-year nursing education, which starts upon their arrivals in the

hospital shortly after they started their course in Fundamental of Nursing I (Appendix A). However, they get familiar with other aspects of reflective activities and gain more knowledge about reflective journal writing when they are in the second term of the first year of their study. In fact, this is a formal setting of a two-hour tutorial provided to all pre-registered student nurses to receive information about reflective writing at the same time. The objective of this tutorial is to prepare them for better and proper practice in reflection throughout the following years of their nursing education. According to the course structure, this two-hour tutorial of reflective writing is planned within the main course of 'Fundamental of Nursing II'. This major course consists of different units, and unit 7 under the title of "effective documentation and reporting" is where the tutorial for reflective journaling is provided. There is going to be a test on the reflective journal writing for the students to receive 10% of the mark for the course. This study did take the fact of assessment on reflective journaling into consideration merely as part of exploring RJW among PRSN. Further, the researcher received journals provided by the participants only for research purposes. In other words, the journals were written by the PRSN participants upon their will and were collected regularly by the researcher.

3.5 Quantitative Data Collection Procedures and Sources of Data

The procedure of data collection was conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative data was in the numeric form obtained from a structured survey questionnaire; whereas the qualitative data was in a form of texts taken from transcribed verbatim of interviews and documents of reflective journaling. In this study, the researcher prioritized and placed more emphasis on qualitative data than on quantitative data procedures. Thus, the qualitative data carries greater weight than quantitative data due to the purpose of the objective of the study that is to

explore reflective journal writing among pre-registered student nurses. As the qualitative data was under detailed multi-layered thematic analysis, it can be considered as the science of meaning rather than numbers. To conduct much richer research, the researcher has decided to have one research question in a quantitative mood of research. In regard to this, the first research question on the perception of the participants was dealt with through a quantitative descriptive questionnaire.

As the main objective of this study is to explore reflective journal writing among Malaysian pre-registered student nurses, the researcher had decided to incorporate participants' perceptions of their practice of reflective journaling as well. In doing so, a structured survey questionnaire was adopted (Chong, 2009) and modified to conduct this quantitative descriptive study. This source of data will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.5.1 Demographics of Participants

Due to the nature of this study, a total of 30 Pre-Registered Student Nurses participated; among which the one male and 29 female with an average age of less than 25 who were enrolled in a three-year Diploma of Nursing program. These participants had experienced reflective journal writing since year one semester one. This group of student nurses was selected because they had been familiar with reflective journaling; so, they could provide rich data for the study, and they were willing to participate in this study. Table 3.1 depicts the summary of the above descriptive analysis.

Table 3.1

Demographic Description of the Participants

Demography	Frequency	Percentage
Nursing Experience		
one year or less	1	33
Less than five year	3	1.0
Not Graduate	26	86.7
Gender		
Male	1	3.3
Female	29	96.7
Age		
25 years or less	30	100.0

3.5.2 Sampling and Implementing the Questionnaire

In qualitative research, the focus is on purposeful sampling; with which the researcher intentionally and carefully selected the participants to learn or understand the fundamental of RJW. However, this part of the study utilizes the quantitative descriptive method; hence, it focuses on the quantitative sampling prior to data collection and implementation of the survey questionnaire; so, in cooperation with the course coordinator, a convenience sampling of 30 PRSN participants was chosen. According to Creswell (2012), convenience sampling is ideal because participants were willing and available to be a part of the study. On the other hand, having the permission of the Head of the Nursing School and having consent from the participants are other rationale for convenience sampling. Creswell (2012, p.146) asserted that "this is a convenience sample because the participants are convenient to

the researcher and are available for the study." Almost all the participants had revealed similar characteristics of gender, age, and educational background. Polit and Beck (2012) indicated that if the group is homogeneous, confounding variables are controlled and internal validity is maintained. Then, the researcher obtained a list of the second-year students; then, the researcher followed a face to face recruitment strategy to select homogeneous sampling individuals. After the group of participants was successfully selected, the time and the date for implementing the survey questionnaire were also settled.

Classroom Arrangement

1. Entrance Door
2. Windows
3. Teacher' Table and Chair
4. Large White Board
5. Students' Tables and Chair
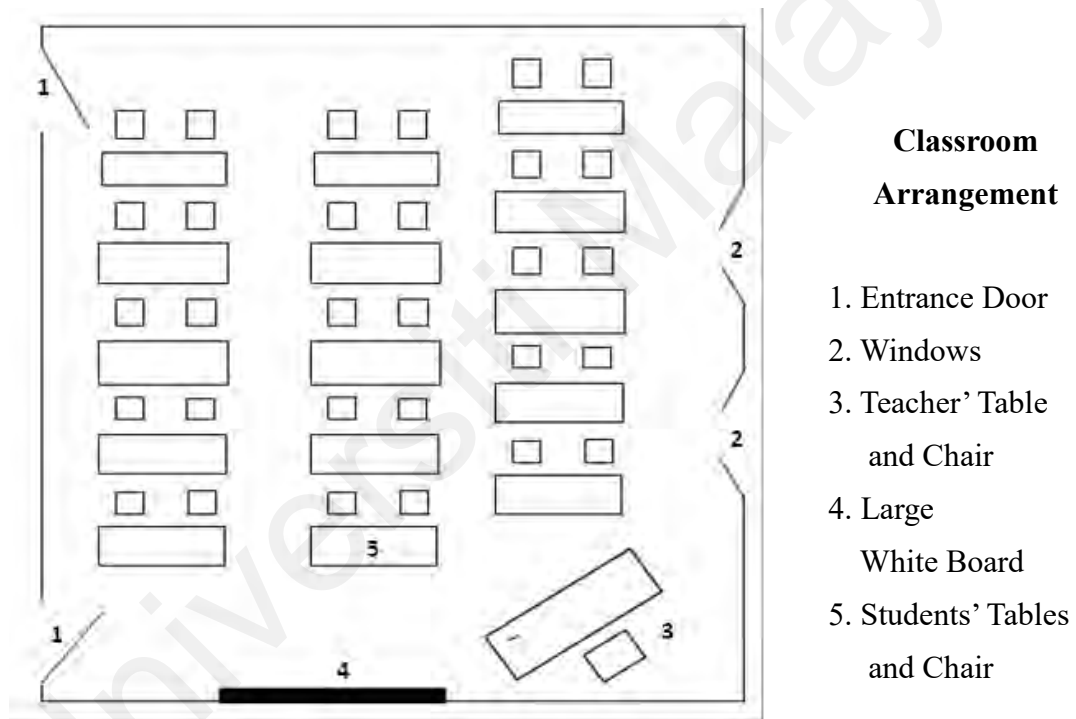
Figure 3.1 Quantitative data collection classroom setting

The researcher met the participants in a large classroom after their ordinary class, before lunch hour. The classroom had two doors and two large windows and had an ordinary setting of four rows of tables and chairs facing the front door which is used for getting in and out of class. Two students could comfortably use each table. Figure 3.1 illustrates the classroom setting for quantitative data collection.

When all the participants arrived and settled in their place, the researcher provided a brief introduction about the background of the study, a brief explanation about the questionnaire and her great appreciation for their participation before she handed in the questionnaire. The setting of the chairs and tables was that two student nurses were sharing the same table. The researcher let them discuss the questions before they answer. No time limit was allotted to answer the question for providing less stressful conditions for the participants. The researcher sat on the corner of the room and occasionally left the room not to disturb the participants; but kept her distance to minimize interference and to avoid any possible biasness, but she was close enough to be reached if she was needed by the participants to clarify any points or to rectify problems. It took about 45 minutes that all the participants finished answering the questionnaire; and then, the researcher collected the questionnaires which were handed in voluntarily. When everyone handed the questionnaire, some bags of small token were given to show appreciation for their participation.

3.5.3 Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire was used as an instrument for this quantitative descriptive part of the study because of the popularity of the survey questionnaire in education that can easily describe the abstract phenomenon like perception. A pure quantitative study was conducted by Chong in 2009 with student nurses in University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC). She used a survey questionnaire in her study with 97 student nurses. The researcher adopted the same concepts of the questionnaire in Chong's study and modified it according to the objective and the research question of this study. The reasons for modification were to have the questions more suitable and more appropriate for the objectives of this study and to find the answers to the research questions. In this research, the main concern of the first objective and the

major focus of the first research question were to find out how PRSN perceive reflective journal writing in the process of their professional development. Therefore, based on the literature review of this study, a questionnaire with 47 items in five different sections was designed in terms of personal and professional as well as academic development.

The questionnaire was divided into five categories namely: a) usefulness of reflective practice; b) undesirable effects of reflective practice; c) barriers to good reflection; d) the role of mentors in reflective practice; e) the reflective practice as a tool to assess learning outcomes. The demographic questions about their personal data and certificate of consent were also provided along with the survey questionnaire. The demographic questions and the survey questionnaire are illustrated in Appendix E.

3.5.4 Quantitative Data Analysis Procedures

For the first research question, a structured questionnaire was prepared to statistically find out the overall perception of pre-registered student nurses on reflective journal writing activity. Accordingly, descriptive statistics were utilized to describe trends in the data and to show the general tendencies by calculating the mean (M). However, it may not be a fair representation of the data, because the average is easily influenced by outliers, so by calculating Standard Deviations (SD), the numbers tell us how the measurements for a group are spread out. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012, P. 184) maintained that "the major advantage of descriptive statistics is that they permit researchers to describe the information contained in many, many scores with just a few indices, such as the mean and median.

The items in the questionnaire were considered closed questions and all the responses were presented on Likert type rating scale. To analyze this quantitative data, thus, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, Version 24) was used to analyze the data to describe the trends. Creswell (2012, p.182) stated "to address the research question in quantitative research, you should describe the trend in the data to a single variable or question on your instrument. He emphasized that "to answer this question, we need Descriptive Statistics that indicate general tendencies in the data." The trend in this study refers to the perception of the PRSN on RJW in the process of professional development.

Although there is no theoretical reason to rule out different lengths of the response scale, Creswell (2012, p. 167) maintained that five rating scales illustrate "a scale with theoretically equal intervals among responses." Thus, the participants' responses recorded using only three points in the Likert Scale instead of five to make the data more meaningful. Accordingly, the points of strongly agree combined with agree at one end and strongly disagree combined with disagree at the other end. Due to limited number of participants (n=30), the rating scale was designed for three options of Disagree=1; Uncertain=2; Agree=3. And for the same reason, the frequency and percentile rank to different categories were not calculated. However, according to descriptive statistics, the mean score (M) and the Standard Deviation (SD) was calculated for each item. With the calculations of values through descriptive statistics, the researcher could summarize the overall tendency of the data, variability of the scores and see where one score stands in comparison with others (Creswell, 2012). However, to have more scientific and more reliable results for the participants' perception, the researcher used an extra method of quantitative

data analysis; the Important-Performance Analysis Method or (IPA Matrix). More on this method is explained in the following section.

3.5.4.1 Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA Matrix)

This study utilized an exploratory research technique called Importance-Performance Analysis first proposed by Martilla and James (1977). Although IPA is not a research methodology or a theory, Importance-Performance Analysis matrix is a unique technique that utilizes certain aspects of both approaches of methodology and theory (Williams, 1992). Martilla and James (1977)   introduced this matrix as a simple marketing tool for measuring customers' acceptance of features of marketing programs. The technique has two dimensions of importance and performance represented in X and Y axis consisting of four quadrants. The utility of the IPA lies in its ability to bring together, in this study, both the participants' importance and their performance perspectives. To recap, the visual presentation of the IPA Matrix is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

High Importance

QA. Concentrate Here	QB. Keep up the good work
QC. Low Priority	QD. Possible Overkill
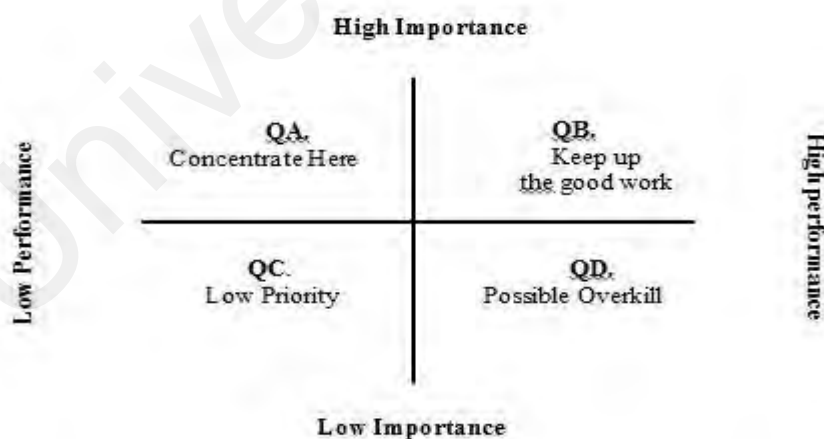
Low Importance

Figure 3.2 Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) Matrix.

Two lines created horizontally and vertically across the matrix from the mid-point of X and Y axis. The points in the IPA matrix is made by using the mean score (M) of both importance and performance dimensions. Importance and performance are rated on a four-point scale, where performance is rated as excellent or good or fair or poor and importance is rated as extremely important or important or significantly important or not important. Accordingly, the second level of analyzing quantitative data, the results of mean was utilized and placed in the four quadrants. With this, the results were more reliable as they demonstrate the actual place of the mean score (M) and the interpretation that follows in the discussion.

Many studies in several fields have used Importance-Performance Analysis of an evaluative technique. These studies are including but not limited to student evaluation of teaching (Overall and Marsh, 1982), instructional effectiveness in adult education (Alberty and Mihalik, 1989), geriatric nursing and programming (Gillespie et al. 1989), and college student services (Chapman, 1993). As prior studies primarily focused on one predetermined aspect of the experience, this study attempts to provide a broader view of the entire participants' perception of reflective journal writing. Thus, Importance-Performance Analysis was carefully chosen, as the evaluative technique for the participants' perception. A brief explanation from Martilla and James (1977) for each quadrant revisited:

QA. First quadrant: Concentrate here, where the high importance and low performance meet each other. This quadrant represents the most critical classification of the activity in hand. The factors should be identified to take action toward possible change in policy and strategies on the underperforming high priority attributes.

QB. Second quadrant: Keep up with the good work, where the high importance and high performance are meeting in one quarter. This quadrant represents the current approaches and strategies should be maintained, continued, and enhanced for the activity and efforts are being effectively allocated and used where they are needed. Sever (2015, p.44) stated that "the attributes situated in this quadrant are considered to be performing well and need continued investments."

QC. Third quadrant: Low priority, where the low importance and low performance attributes meet each other. That is, the attributes are not performed exceptionally well due to be unimportant to learners; so, no immediate action is required as it denotes no threat and represents minor weaknesses.

QD. Fourth quadrant: Possible overkill, where low importance and high-performance attributes meet each other. The attributes in this quadrant are suggestive of over-performance and no improvement can be detected in the learners' performance. Thus, an appropriate effort and resources should be diverted in other required areas

With the explanation above, the aim of using IPA Matrix for this study seems clear. Through IPA matrix, the participants' perceptions of RJW would be clearly explored in the process of their professional development.

3.6 Qualitative Data Collection Procedures and Sources of Data

The focal objective of this study is to explore the reflective journal writing among the Malaysian pre-registered student nurses. For this purpose, the sources of data were two types of interviews and the document of Reflective Journal entries. The

following sections discuss the procedures of data collections for these sources of data.

3.6.1 Interviews

In this study, two types of interviews have been conducted: a focus-group interview and eight one-on-one interviews with the student nurse participants served as the most appropriate sources of qualitative data. These interviews would offer richer and more extensive data than data from survey questionnaires. According to Yin (2012), the open-ended interviews, for instance, can last two to more hours on one single occasion. Alternatively, with this rich timing of interaction between the researcher and the participants through interviews, it can be concluded that in a case study how the reality was constructed and how the answers to researchers' questions gave further value to the key elements of the research (Yin, 2012). Moreover, Merriam (2009, p. 86) points out that "interviewing is probably the most common form of data collection in qualitative studies." Interview as a source for collecting data in a qualitative study is the most popular approach in educational research (Creswell, 2009). This type of approach still is ideal for the qualitative study, if the interviewees are not reluctant to talk and share ideas with a group (Yin, 2008).

After the initial meeting with the student nurses, the researcher called those who wished to participate to schedule appointments for their interview. Written consent was obtained at the time of the interview and students were advised that they could withdraw from the study at any time. After maintaining confidentiality, the researcher has asked pre-determined open-ended questions not to guide the interview but to gain insights and receive interviewees' comments and clarification (Creswell, 2012). According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008), using open-ended questions is the

best strategy in a one-on-one interview. The questions should enlighten the interviewees' minds on the topic, which can explore a wide range of ideas. In this type of interview, open-ended questions were asked to get at "participants' subjective experience" when they articulated their opinion without any suggestion and interference to lead them to presume answers (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008, p. 450). Likewise, Yin (2008) believed that during any type of interview, the interviewer can ask respondents for their insights and opinions about the topic as the basis for further questioning.

Two types of interview were considered as the sources of data and they will be discussed in detail in the following sections. It is worth mentioning that the researcher's background as a registered nurse with more than 15 years of clinical practice experience augmented her understanding of the participants' cultural world of a community of practice.

3.6.1.1 Focus Group Interview

The focus-group interview (FGI) was conducted as the first formal encounter with the participants to collect data for this study. The main purpose of conducting a focus group interview (FGI) was to collect participants' shared understanding of the reflective journal practice in their curriculum. Another reason of conducting a focused group interview, in this study, was to build rapport with the participants as the researcher hardly knew them. This session of focus group interview provided opportunity for the researcher to get familiarity with the participants and they got to know the researcher better. In this respect, the researcher had tried to make a friendly atmosphere in the setting for the focus group interview. Since English was not their mother language, the researcher was trying to ask the

questions clearly that everyone could understand. The time and place for the focus group interview were announced in the initial meeting with all the 30 students. Although the researcher expected a large number could show up, only limited numbers of 14 pre-registered student nurses have participated in the focus group interview. In this type of interview, the researcher and the participants engaged in a conversation for the first time. This interview provided the precise words of the participants that audio-recorded for 72 minutes; and like any other type of interview, they were transcribed into 18 pages of verbatim for easy manual data analysis.

When the researcher realized that some of the participants were reluctant to talk, whether out of shyness or afraid of being judged on their language; she explained to them and assured them that they were not going to be judged by their speaking and put forward all her afford to eliminate any threatening situation. The goal to have efficient interview was twofold; one was that all participants talk, that is, no one left behind without speaking and all could speak on the same time frame. The researcher, hence, made sure to have provided equal opportunities to all participants to talk and to share their opinions. In the beginning, some participants, even, spoke in a very low voice that was hard to hear. Then, they were asked to speak more loudly and clearly as their talk was being recorded; which was the main source of inhibition. Therefore, a brief explanation for the need to use the voice recoded was given. The positive outcome of this session was that towards the end of the interview session, most of them were talkative and many elements of inhibition were already faded away and both parties, the researcher and participants, had better feelings about the interview procedures.

Another purpose of having focus group interview (FGI) was to gain information about the participants' opinions on other elements influencing reflective

journal writing. During this session, the researcher could find out about the participants' perspectives of their knowledge of reflection and deeper understanding of their perceptions about reflective journaling. Another purpose for conducting a focus group interviews was the elements of 'the time and tension'. Creswell (2012, p. 218) believed that the focus group interview is suitable when "the time to collect information is limited and individuals are hesitant to provide information." Thus, when the participants have very limited time to spare outside the curriculum, the focus group interview is suitable to avoid any extra burden on the participants.

In addition, the researcher has paid attention to an important issue of encouraging all the participants to talk. Open-ended, yet semi-structured, questions were used mainly in qualitative research for the reason that they do not impose answers on the interviewees but let them be more expressive about the topic. The focus group interview, later, appeared to be more like the discussion when the student nurses have found the ground to talk about their feelings, attitudes, as well as their perception about reflective writing activities, which provided a deeper understanding of the topic of reflection and reflective practice. When the student nurses were asked to describe their ideas about reflection, they showed excitement and interest on the topic. And when they discussed the use of reflection during their practicum, they were asked to provide examples of the real-life situation that caused them to reflect. In this way, the researcher could capture the participants' true feelings and emotions about reflective journal writing. According to a constructivist perspective, Merriam (2009) indicates that the focus group method of obtaining data is constructed socially with a group of people who have knowledge of the subject. Therefore, the researcher could collect rich data from the participants' perceptions about reflective writing tasks.

This focus group interview (FGI) was rather challenging for the researcher as she could take short notes and all the discussion was audiotaped. The researcher personal notes during this and after, however, consisted of only 7 pages. This session of interview took about 72 minutes before the researcher realized that the participants looked tired and they are not interested to talk anymore; then, she called the end of discussion. The researcher, however, could take a slight number of personal notes because she had to pay attention to the interviewees; to make sure all provide their ideas and to allocate time equally to all participants. The researcher realized that having eye contact and being receptive when they are talking made them get more involved in the discussion. The researcher's role was mainly a moderator who could also facilitate the trend of the discussion. The list of questions for the focus group interview is illustrated in (Appendix F).

Similar to the initial meeting with student nurses, this time also the researcher was accompanied by a local Malaysian lady friend. Being in unfamiliar territory, this lady friend played the role of an informant in the sense that she could understand the culture and the situation and articulate it for the researcher. She also helped the researcher in arranging the room before the interview, serving refreshments, and taking pictures. The informed consent letters were signed by all participants in order to achieve confidentiality. Figure 3.3 illustrates the room arrangement for data collection through a focus group interview (FGI).

1.	Corridor
2.	Entrance Doors
3.	Student Hostel
4.	Windows
5.	Middle Table
6.	Voice Recorder
7.	The Researcher
8.	The Participants
9.	The researcher's Companion
10.	Extra chairs
11.	Portable Whiteboard
12.	Table Used for Refreshment
13.	The Security Guard Stand
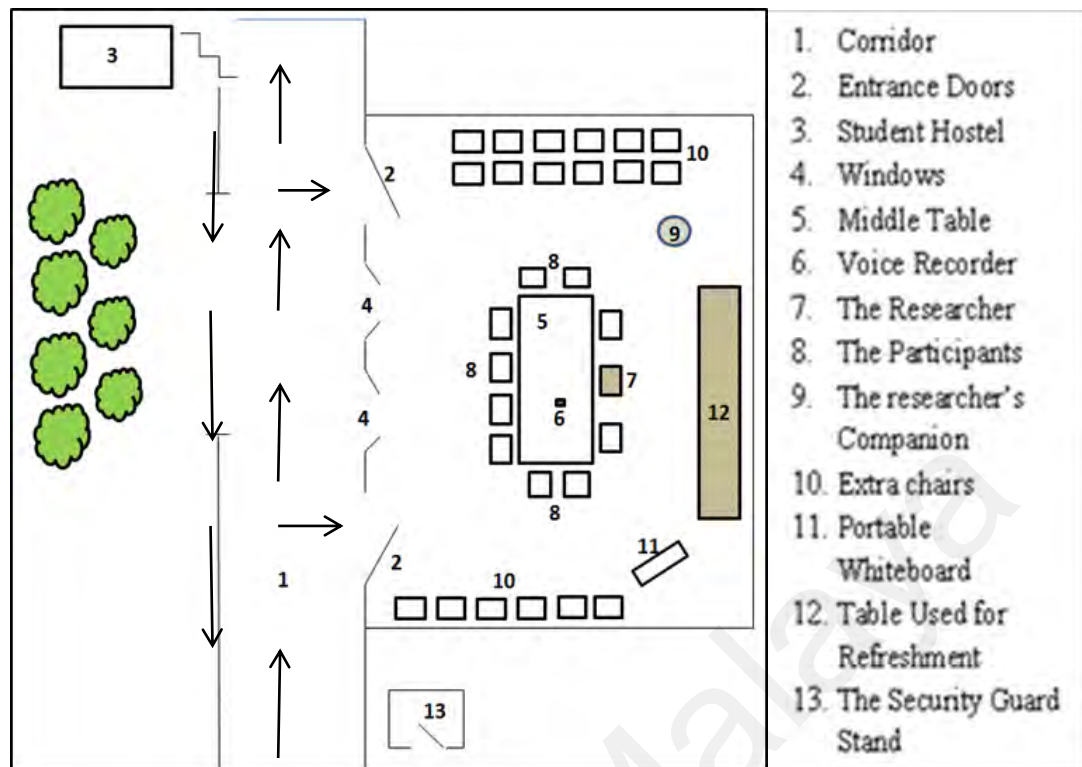
Figure 3.3. The room arrangement for the focus group interview

3.6.1.2 One-on-one Interviews

For these types of interviews, the arrangement was done according to the time and place which were more convenient for the participants. After the focus group interview (FGI), this arrangement was done with each individual participant. They all agreed on having their interview in the same room due to accessibility for everyone. As far as time was a great concerned for everyone, the arrangement was done after their school time before retiring to their dormitory providing that there was no examination the following day.

After the initial introduction and briefing session with 30 student nurses, only 14 student nurses participated in the focus group discussion; however, in this type of interview, only eight student nurses came on voluntary bases. The individual interviews were conducted privately in the same location. This place seemed very

convenient for the participants as it was at their educational institution which was easy to reach after their clinical posting. These qualitative interviews were conducted when the researcher asked participants general and yet open-ended questions. The replies were recorded for transcription. The guided semi-structured questions for an in-depth one-on-one interview with the participants are listed in Appendix G.
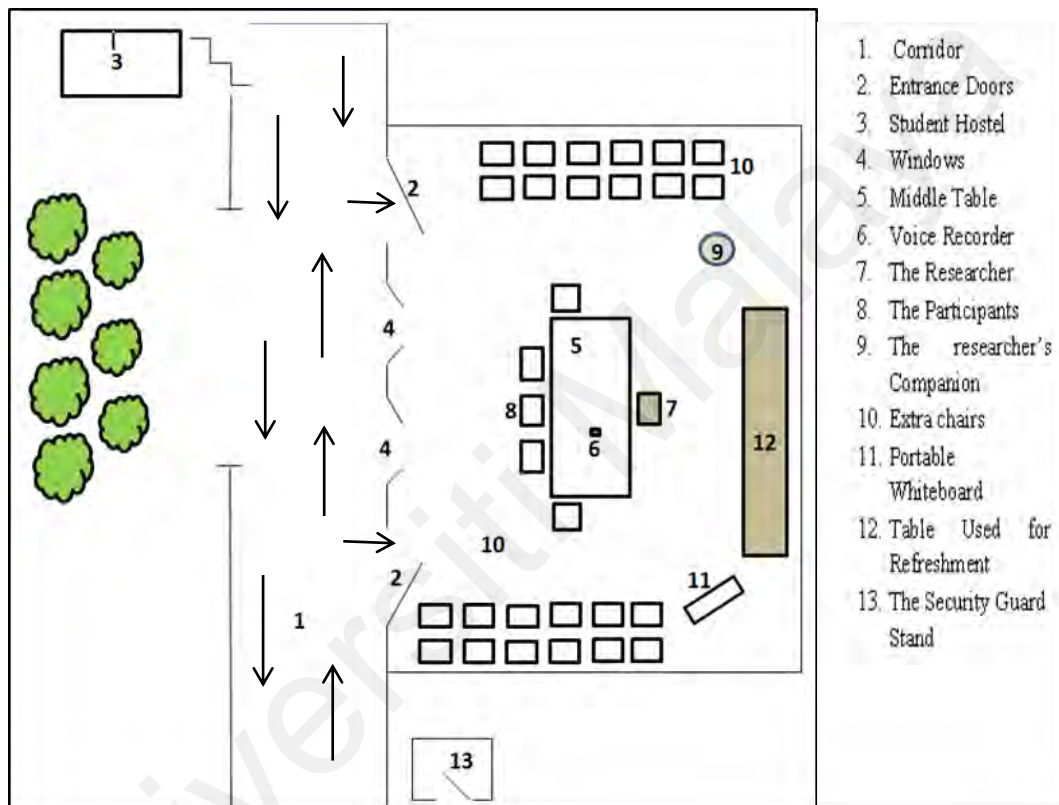
Figure 3.4. The room arrangement for one-on-one interview

On the days arranged for the one-on-one interviews, participants mostly arrived on time in a group of two either merely were accompanied by their friends or with other participants who wanted to have their interviews as well. However, these one-on-one interviews were conducted privately. To achieve confidentiality, the informed consent letter was signed by each participant. The time of interview for each participant varied between 20 to 42 minutes; the differences basically depended on

the participants when they were talking, they were not interrupted if their points relevant to the question or the topic of the study. The interviews, then, were audio-recorded and transcribed into verbatim which provided about 78 pages of transcription. The researcher personal notes during this interview consisted of about 26 pages. Figure 3.4 illustrates the room arrangement for data collection through a one-on-one interview.

Although the one-on-one interview was a time-consuming method of collecting data, it was still considered a popular approach in educational research (Creswell, 2012). Time-consuming means that the researcher had to set time with each participant, conduct the interview, and record the answers from only one participant in the study at a time. Fortunately, most of the participants who attended these one-on-one interviews had been expressive and could articulate and share their ideas comfortably. To acquire rich data through individual interviews, probing was the technique used to elicit more information. Creswell (2012) pointed out that probing is of two types; clarifying or elaborating. For instance, for clarification, the researcher had to ask the participants: "how did you overcome this situation?" (This question asked when a participant mentioned about having difficulties in finding words to express her feeling in writing). An example of elaboration is that when the researcher asked the participants: "tell me more about it."

Through one-on-one interviews with the PRSN, the researcher acquired their further ideas and opinions on their writing to make clarification and triangulation of the given information. This semi-structured interview has been conducted with the student participants prior to their writing of reflective journals and subsequent collection of them. The outlook of the data collection through interviews is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

The Outlook of Data Collection through Interviews

No.	Methods of Data Collection	No. of Participants	Length of Time (Interviews)	Transcribed Verbatim (Pages)
1	Focus Group Interview	10	72 min	18
2	One-on-one Interviews	8	20-42 min	78
3	Personal Notes	-	-	7+23
	Total			**129**

3.6.2 Reflective Journal Entries

These reflective journals are considered private records of real-life events experienced and written by the pre-registered student nurses. These reflective journals represent a higher order of thinking of the participants in the process of learning from the clinical posting. Creswell (2012) calls them 'private documents' that provide a valuable source of information in helping the researcher understand focal points in qualitative studies. Although reflection is a private act, it can be explicated in what the learners write in their reflective texts. These types of documents are valuable data to understand the central phenomenon in this qualitative case study method which is the "heart" of data source (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The focal aim of this study is to explore the reflective journal writing among pre-registered student nurses in Malaysia. In order to attain the research objectives and answer the research questions, certain procedures had been conducted to get the samples of reflective journal entries effectively and purposefully.

A preliminary study was conducted around reflective journal writing written by these particular participants to find a solid background for this study. The researcher found out that reflective journal writing has been performed as a part of the nursing curriculum from the first year of nursing college. That is, reflective journal writings are written by the pre-registered student nurses after their clinical practices as the course requirement or as the nurse lecturers' requirement. However, PRSN must do it in more professional fashion when they are reaching the second term of their second year of college for the reason that they have to sit for an exam. For the exam, student nurses write a piece of reflective writing as an assessment of their ability to reflect upon real-life events of clinical practice that carries 10% of a total course grade of Fundamental Nursing II. Accordingly, each student nurse submits one reflective journal to the nurse tutors for assessing their clinical abilities in fulfilling nursing tasks. In other words, these journals were used as a means of communication between the nurse tutors or nurse mentors and student nurses. From the nurse tutors' perspective, reflective journals were genuine reports from student nurses' activities in clinical posting. And from the student nurses' perspective, reflective journals were the means to show their abilities to perform the nursing tasks to their tutors. It must be emphasized that their assessment on reflection and reflective writing is not the concern of this study

However, for this study, participants were asked to write two reflective journals or at least one journal in a period of four weeks during March and April 2014 when the academic semester was in progress. They were instructed to write their reflective journals upon any real-life situation they had encountered in their clinical posting. Thus, the participants had chosen to write each journal representing a unique real-life event either she had performed or had observed in practicum. The

journals were collected by the end of March 2014. There was an arrangement for collecting the journals between two of the participants and the researcher; these student nurses played a role of correspondence to receive journals from the participants, collect them and hand them to the researcher, consecutively.

Accordingly, the researcher had expected to receive a maximum of eight journals or a minimum of four journals from each participant. Consequently, at the end of the fourth week a number of 54 single reflective journals consisting of 144 pages had been collected for this study. These reflective journals were collected over four weeks before the participant student nurses got ready for the midterm exam. The journal entries delivered by hands and collected at the end of each week by the researcher. These reflective journal entries, then, were duplicated and the originals were kept in a secure place and the copied ones were used for analysis. Table 3.3 provides the outlook of the number of reflective journal writing entries collected as data for this qualitative case study.

Table 3.3

The Outlook of the Reflective Journal Writing Entries

No	Names of Participants (Pseudonyms)	Number of Reflective Journal Entries	Number of Pages
1	Anna	8	27
2	Ayesha	4	8
3	Fatin	7	15
4	Lena	8	27
5	Nouri	7	19
6	Safura	8	22
7	Siti	8	16
8	Yun	4	10
Total	**N=8**	**N=54**	**N=144**

Two significant points are needed to be mentioned here. One point is that the participants had written these reflective journals in English not in their native language Bahasa Malaya. This was out of courtesy of the course coordinator to encourage them to write in English. Moreover, for establishing trustworthiness, the PRSN had been explicitly assured that their writing would not be judged for the English language mechanical components such as the use of grammar or vocabulary, but their abilities in writing reflective journals are the core objectives for this study. This assurance had comforted the student nurses to write at ease and lowered their possible anxiety for writing in English. Another point worth mentioning is that the participants followed a guideline to prepare their reflective journals. This guideline containing some questions was adapted from Gibb's circle of reflection (1984). The guideline is depicted in Appendix H.

The use of the guideline is not mandatory; however, it is used by almost all the participants. One of the main reasons that were articulated by almost all participants was that the questions in the guideline facilitate their reflective journal writing. However, the guideline has little focus on critical thinking; that is, while writing about daily activities, these novice student nurses were engaged very little in critical reflection. This verifies Dewey's idea of reflection (1933), in which he states that in reflection there is a genuine problem to reflect upon.

The inquiry of this study emphasizes on gaining an understanding of reflective journal writing among PRSN during clinical practice. This study examined each piece of reflective journal entries to explore participants' levels of reflection and observe what principles and ideologies surround the issue of reflective journal writing. Therefore, thorough studies are achieved to meet the objective and gain information to answer related research questions.

3.7 Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures

"We have few agreed-on canons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness."

(Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 22)

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), unlike quantitative analysis that data collection, data processing, and data analysis are divided into discrete stages of instrument development; in qualitative evaluation, the researcher starts processing the data and making sense of the gathered information as soon as they are collected. Moreover, the process of analysing qualitative research requires multiple rounds of revisiting the data as a new idea emerges, more formulation develops, and a better and deep understanding of the material occurs. Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 23) coined "qualitative analysis is fundamentally an iterative set of processes."

In this qualitative research of case study, data collection was conducted through two different types of interviews, namely focus group interview (FGI) and one-on-one interview and reflective journal writing entries. Merriam (2009) states that "a qualitative design is emergent" which means nothing in qualitative studies can be planned ahead of time, to the extent of what questions can be asked or what can be said in the interviews unless collected data are analysed. As a dynamic type of this study, the analyses become more rigorous in a qualitative method as the study progresses (Merriam, 2009).

For analysing the data, the researcher has decided to analyse the data manually. The main reason for not using any form of software (e.g. NVivo) is that some of this software is quite confusing and difficult to work with. The other reason was that using computer software gives the sense of being in the distance from the data made the process of analysis time-consuming. Another reason for not using any form of

software was the transcribed verbatim for both interviews and the journals counted for less than 500 pages that appeared to be easier to process manually. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.20) assert "unlike quantitative analysis that numbers are the material of analysis, qualitative analysis deals with words and is guided by fewer universal rule and standardized procedures than statistical analysis." They also describe the major stages of data analysis as data reduction and display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Accordingly, the following sections discuss the procedures of data analysing of the three types of data for this part of study.

3.7.1 Organizing Qualitative Data

At this level, organizing a mass amount of qualitative data involves assembling relevant data to determine how they can answer the research questions. The data organization procedure was conducted with the transcribed verbatim of the interviews. For this purpose, the researcher created a file for each participant and named them by the real name of the participant. However, since the interviews were conducted upon semi-structured questions, the verbatim completely transcribed. As for organizing this raw data of interviews, the verbatim of each participant was kept separately in a file and named accordingly. Therefore, eight files were created for a one-on-one interview and one file was created for focus group interviews and labelled properly. This method made the data organized and easy to retrieve. It is worth mentioning that frequent meetings with participants to conduct interviews provided a great opportunity for the researcher to check with the previously interviewed participants to make possible hidden points clear to avoid any misunderstanding and misinterpretations.

The next step of data organization refers to the process of how to make use of all these data to answer the research questions. In the same vein, Miles and

Huberman (1994) asserted that qualitative analysis is unsystematic, undisciplined, and "purely subjective." However, they have introduced three major phases of data analysis of how to make sense of the raw data: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the following section of Chapter Three, these relevant phases to data organization were discussed.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the first stage of analysis is data reduction; in which the transcriptions of the interviews verbatim and the reflective journals have been examined separately, read and reread line-by-line, compared several times to identify the meaningful unit of data. For the sake of manageability, these data reduction forces the researcher to make choices between what units of data should be highlighted, minimized or set aside completely. This process could be done according to the concepts and purposes of the research questions as well as the concepts from the literature, respectively.

Developing the concepts involves a series or a combination of deductive and inductive investigation to generate open coding to be ready for the emerging meaningful categories or themes. Accordingly, the procedures of data reduction were conducted for both interviews. All the interviews were listened to several times and transcribed by the researcher after each interview. As interviews are mainly qualitative in nature, the contents of transcription of the interviews were considered documents that require 'inductive analyses' as the participants are communicating meaning through interviews (Merriam, 2009).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the second stage of qualitative data analysis is data display. The units of data from the transcribed interviews and reflective journals were more organized and more manageable at this level after some reduction. Then, the researcher has prepared matrices that displayed the data

that could be assigned into codes, and then classified into themes and categories. According to Merriam (2009, p.205), "the process of coding raw data and constructing categories involves capturing relevant ideas especially the frequency of messages and the number of times a certain phrase is used." At this stage, the main concepts of the research questions guided the researcher in the process of data display or coding.

The researcher had inductively worked with data to make meaning out of them; a long process of description and interpretation in a hope of establishing structured themes or categories. Qualitative data analysis is a multilayer procedure that requires a lot of effort to get the richness out of the raw data. The intra-case analysis is the first layer in the data display. Then each interview that related to one of the participants was examined critically. The above procedures were taken for the transcribed verbatim of the interviews. In order to demonstrate the main idea, the researcher has decided to illustrate data display procedures of some parts of the themes and subthemes of interviews in appendix I. Table 3.4 illustrates the coding of interviews that focused on the effectiveness of reflective journal writing in improving professional knowledge and skills.

Similar procedures were taken for exploring the main concept of the third research question; the researcher subjectively disregarded unassimilated and uncategorized data received through reflective journal entries. That is, the researcher decided which data can be used for the description of the main concept in the third research question.

Table 3.4

Coding of Both Types of Interviews

Themes	Codes and Sample Quotes
1. Reflective Journal Writing in the Process of Learning	
Knowledge Improvement	opportunity to remember, to plan future action, reflecting on/learning from mistakes, realizing the wrong doing, quality of learning in nursing and English writing improve my weaknesses, quality of learning, realizing area of lacking knowledge in the English language
Collaborative Learning	ask friends to develop confidence, rarely go to my tutor, better reflective journal with friend's help, supporting atmosphere, peer learning causes better RJ, so better learning, with discussion with friends is helpful before writing, reflecting on others' behaviour, shows our tutors how much we know, supportive tutors, expressing appreciation, improve writing skills,
Effective Reflection	reflect on their experience affecting their academic life, reflect on evidence, life-long learning, able to put herself in others' shoes, reflection don't let the event go and pass, reflect on observations of "what" others did, "how" they did it and "why", in practicum you think of the most suitable steps and the reason behind it, questioning the purpose, RJ is the learning through critical thinking tutors know we don't repeat our mistakes because we think about [reflect on] it, write both negative as well as the positive side of event/ incident, improve communication,
2. Reflective Journal Writing and Self-awareness	
Evaluating Self-efficacy (learning needs)	realizing learning needs, ask should I do it or as Stf N, realize about my ability, feel proud of what she did to pt, , focusing improve my memory, do better in future, making decisions, expressing confidence,
Develop. competence	avoid automation, know what to do if the incident happens again avoid routine nursing care, informing my tutor about how I managed my pt alone, reflect on past experience gives me assurance to be calm know what to do as a future nurse, member of community, Stf N as a role model, avoid mistakes makes me a better nurse later,
Evaluation and Making Decision	evaluate others' actions for our own learning, I become critical in my practice and ask "why" I didn't what I should / could do, see what I did makes me a person, learning from good and bad incidents, during CPR, I saw DR. is not acting fast, learn how to save pt's life, follow examples or the experience, learning happens when looking at the situation in a critical manner
Critical thinking	with tutors, with society, with other health care members, RJW as homework don't make us "*reflector*", write good story to avoid lecturers' condemnation, write what tutors like to hear, write about my mistake may make my tutor to think negatively about me FEELING??
3.Reflective Journal Writing and Emotional Exploration	
Expressing true Emotions	express inner feeling, avoid being scolded, asks why "that" happened, expressing gratitude, improve memory/ remembering feel stressed why we should do/ or need to do RJW, too busy to write / time constrain, write in RJ what I can't tell others or don't trust to tell them, never do RJ for writing only do as homework, reflection is not common practice among Malaysians
Guideline	increase familiarity with RJW, encouraging, helpful to write journal, effective journaling with GL, prevents forgetting the details,

Note: Patient=pt; Staff nurse=Stf N; Guideline=GL;

The reflective journal entries provided the largest size of data received from eight participants. Upon receiving the participants' journal data, the original reflective journals were duplicated by the researcher to be able to work with easily. The pages were segmented into side margins that could be used for open coding. The open coding was grouped to form the analytical coding that reflects the repeated statements appeared in the transcribed texts. The more prominent ones showed regularities that could be subsequently formed categories. As for the concept of levels of reflection mentioned in the third research question, the raw data of reflective journals was undergone an inductive content analysis procedure to find out what levels of reflection reveals by the pre-registered student nurses.

Through reading the reflective journal, it was required to disregard some parts in the writings; such as the part that participants explained about the time of clinical posting, time of their arrival, and some details about their patients, such as age, gender, medical diagnoses, and nursing tasks related to their duty upon the patients. This information contained materials that were not relevant to this study; therefore, mostly were ignored to make the journal entries much clearer to work with. Thus, each participant had a file of what she wrote on what week and labelled as RJ1 (as a reflective journal 1), RJ2, etc. When the journals were formed into matrices, they were kept in separate files for each individual participant and were named accordingly. In this process, then, they were ready to be read, re-read and thoroughly examined to find any sign of levels of reflection. To make the point clear, Table 3.5 illustrates the coding of reflective journals that focused on the three different levels of reflection.

The process of data reduction and data display procedures for the reflective journal is demonstrated in appendix J. This is a journal sample of one of the participants that are displayed to show the process.

Table 3.5

Coding of Reflective Journal Writing

Themes	Codes
1.Content Level (Descriptive)	
Authentic Learning Experience	Practice CPR on a real person, dealing with a pt with dementia, increase knowledge in environment, being observant to others' behaviour, a great opportunity to learn many things in one single live event.
Collaboration with Others	Scolded by pt or Stf N, not want to be like her (Stf N), observant to others' attempt to save pt, how to work in a group, improve com. With pt, look for supportive indv., learning through observing others, learn to deal with pt's family member, cooperative Stf N,
Exciting & Challenging Profession	Angry pt's mother & Stf N, being firm & friendly, able to calm screaming pt, receiving pt's appreciation, condemn prf. of wrongdoing, excited over wrongly naming the pt dealing with pt's lack of knowledge, observant of how a prf. reacts towards a bad-mannered pt.
2. Process Level (Practical)	
Theory & Practice Connection	See abnormality in equipment, correct positioning pt to breathe, thoughtful to the priority, become conscious of being blamed for pt's condition, feel bad about her mistake, aware of her self-efficacy, conscious of the tutor's reaction to her writing, be more conscious to her behaviour, need to increase knowledge and prf. skills,
Forming Professional Identity	Will be more cooperative with others in the future, will perform a better procedure to cause less pain for pt, will always pay attention to and fulfil pt's needs, want to be a member of the community, want to be a good nurse in future, not want to be like some staff nurses, always be responsible and accountable, will be prepared physically and mentally for her profession, will widen her knowledge and perspective, will sharpen her communication skills, will be trustful and approachable, will respect other's privacy
3.Premise Level (Critical)	
Being Judgemental	Should be more attentive to pt, should inform Stf N earlier, should have a rationale for her action, judging a prf. of his wrong doing, assessing acting, asks "why" being scolded by Stf N, observe prf.'s behaviour and look for a reason
Developing Competence	Overcome her shock, able to handle pt under ventilation machine, able to act calmly and quickly, checking the Patient's Case Note (PCN) before administering meds, be accountable, act tactful with Stf N and doctors, answerable to questions asked, willing to consult with professionals in the community of practice, learn from the mistake,

Note: Patient=pt; staff nurse=Stf N; communication=com; individual=indv; professional=prf.

Therefore, the data extracted during reading each journal or verbatim were highlighted; that is similar data were designated with the same colour markers. This color-coding of the data allowed the researcher to distinguish systematic patterns and to find interrelationships. That is, the open coding led to analytical coding and the categories were constituted representing these levels of reflection. Some instances of overlapping, of course, can be seen across the participants when these patterns were compared and contrasted. At this stage, the higher order of categories or additional themes has emerged that is beyond the initial discovery at the first stage. This method was extremely helpful in identifying any critical paths, supporting evidence, and discrete points of data.

Likewise, the data display for the inter-case analysis was organized according to the concepts of research questions. With the matrices of journals and interview verbatim of each participant in hand; therefore, two major parallel files were created with eight compartments designating to each participant. In this way, the data from different sources could be thoroughly examined against each other.

Moreover, to make sense out of the data, the researcher had gone through combining, reducing, and interpreting what participants had written in their journal and what they had said in their interviews. More on this will be discussed and illustrated in the following chapters.

3.8 Factors Dealing with Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two important aspects of establishing trustworthiness in any study. The researcher is confident to have rigorously conducted research and carefully observed validity and reliability in both types of research moods regarding

the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted. The researcher had given careful attention to presenting the findings of both research paradigms.

For the first research question, a consistent and rigor survey questionnaire was adopted by permission received from the author Mei Chan Chong from University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC), department of Nursing Science. Although the researcher followed the general design of the questionnaire, she had to add some items to make it suitable for the intended purpose of this study. Due to this fact, two important facets of the validity and reliability of the adopted and adapted survey questionnaire were taken into consideration. The following procedures were conducted to measure and test the validity and reliability of the adopted questionnaire to yield representative data.

According to Polit and Beck (2004), the first step in validating a survey questionnaire is to establish face validity. In this regard, the researcher asked some experts who understand the topic and knowledgeable about reflection and reflective journals to go through the survey questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness and relevancy of the items to the objectives of the research. The next step was to check the content of the survey for possible errors like confusing items in case of wording, ambiguity, double-barred and leading questions. The procedure of conducting content validity would minimize the danger of submissive response bias. Then, at this level, the survey questionnaire had been undergone a pilot study with a sample of twenty individuals of the subset of the intended population. Then the changes were taken into consideration and applied to the original participants of the study. Another procedure to establish validity for this adopted questionnaire was to conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) following Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). However, as there must be more than 100 individuals to conduct such a test, there is

no result for such tests; that is, this questionnaire lacks the results for construct validity, therefore, it cannot be used for the general population.

Since the questionnaire was an adopted one and some items were added, it required to have internal validity. Therefore, for identifying underlying internal consistency of the survey questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha or Coefficient Alpha (CA) was used to measure reliability. As the CA values range from 0-1.0, the results of being close to .80 for each category were convincing enough to show the acceptable degree of internal consistency of the adapted survey questionnaire. As the Table 3.6 illustrated, the result for the internal consistency for section 5 was very low. This section of the questionnaire was about the role of reflective journal writing for the purpose of assessing learning outcomes, and because assessment was not in the scope of this study, the result was accepted as it is. The summary of the results for each category in the questionnaire was illustrated in the Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

Reliability Statistics of Cronbach Alpha

Section	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
1	.768	13
2	.714	13
3	.709	5
4	.789	7
5	.493	9
Total	**.797**	**47**

3.9 Factors Dealing with Trustworthiness

Lack of rigor in quantitative studies usually relates to issues of validity and reliability. However, for the qualitative method, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 301)

have introduced criteria such as credibility, dependability, conformity, and transferability that indicate the trustworthiness has been taken into consideration in the research.

3.9.1 Credibility

The credibility or internal validity of the data has been addressed through informal member checking during the interviews to verify if the researcher has correctly understood what the participants expressed in their reflective journal writing as well as in their interviews. A technique known as triangulation has been also used to improve the quality between different sources of data, types of data to ensure that the study will be accurate and credible (Creswell, 2012). To support the trustworthiness of the study and in order to provide the clarification of meaning, the researcher intended to use multiple data sources obtained from questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis.

3.9.2 Dependability

Dependability is an approach to establish the reliability of the data. This involves a detailed audit trail. In the process of reliability, another researcher who was unfamiliar with the participants, but familiar with the reflective journal writing has acted as a rater to assist the researcher in enhancing reliability through the criterion of dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study, an audit trail defines the way data were collected, how the themes were derived; in general, how the study was conducted.

3.9.3 Confirmability

Confirmability demonstrates the appropriateness of the implementation of the study and the correctness of the data collection process. During data collection, the

process and the procedures were discussed between the researcher and her supervisors. Moreover, the course coordinator was informed of the time and the type of data collection. All the data obtained from the questionnaires, the interviews, and the reflective journals have been kept by the researcher and all the documentation related to the study will be available upon request by any responsible professional (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

3.9.4 Transferability

Transferability or external validity refers to the process of providing a detailed rich description of the data. The interviews, either focus group discussion or one-on-one interviews, and reflective journals along with the detailed data analysis have provided a rich description of the trend of reflective journal activity under the naturalistic study to serve the purpose of transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

3.10 Limitation

This section will address the limitation of both quantitative and qualitative methods of research in this research. Limitation in the quantitative method refers to the adopted survey questionnaire. Since this survey questionnaire was adopted and modified to fit the requirements of for this study, it is required to conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) following Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to obtain construct validity. However, this study lacks the results for the above requirements due to the number of participants that were less than 100. Therefore, it cannot be used for the general population.

Another category of limitation refers to the quantitative method of this research. As conduction quantitative expository research, this study was mainly

conducted with a limited number of pre-registered student nurses (n=8) who were in their second year the second term of their Diploma of Nursing in Malaysia. Therefore, the findings are limited to this particular context and to these specific participants.

Although the researcher has tried to establish a friendly environment and make rapport with the participants, there was a time that they were not responsive to the situation of the study. And the researcher had a hard time to get the participants' full cooperation, and this situation could affect the validity of the study.

The actual reflective journal writing was done mainly to get a passing mark; thus, writing reflective journals merely for this study were time-consuming and troublesome for the participants. It was suggested to have at least two journals for a period of four weeks; although some participants duly provided eight journals, not all of them provide the same number of journals and there were some that submitted the least number of journals, only four.

It is worth mentioning that the researcher has been in the field of nursing practice for over 15 years, thus she was familiar with many of the medical jargon used in the participants' journals and interviews. However, it was not clear if the participants do write these medical expressions in their journals in details as well.

3.11 The Ethics of the Study

An essential document that this study has warranted is an approval from the Medical Ethics Committee (MEC), the letter of approval is illustrated in Appendix B. Upon the request made by the Head of the Diploma School of Nursing, the document was obtained online, which was completed by the researcher prior to signing by the head

of the language and literacy department of the Faculty of Education, the respected supervisor, and the nursing school principal, respectively. The committee has a meeting monthly to study and approve the application of permittence for conducting the research in the hospital or any establishment related to it. Consequently, the approval was obtained which represents the full consent of the MEC to the researcher to pursue the study, and the list of members of the Medical Ethics Committee (*Senarai Ahli Jawatankuasa Etika Perubatan*) is illustrated in Appendix C, as well.

According to Merriam (2002), the issue of ethical conduct establishes the trustworthiness of the research by ensuring that the findings are done in a rigorous, systematic and ethical manner (Merriam, 2002). Accordingly, pseudonyms were used in order to protect the participants' privacy. Another issue that this study has observed is the matter of confidentiality of the information obtained from the participants. Therefore, informed consent letters were collected from all participants to represent the trustworthiness and they were assured that their names and information will stay confidential (Appendix D). The purpose of the informed consent is to provide confidentiality for the representation of the participants (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

3.12 Summary of the Discussions in Chapter Three

In this methodology chapter, the researcher has provided a thorough description and rationale for the choice of qualitative interpretive research design used to conduct this study. In order to investigate the case of reflective journal writing, qualitative and quantitative instruments, data collection, and data analysis were conducted to answer the three research questions.

For the quantitative method, a survey questionnaire was introduced and the methods of quantitative data analysis were explained. In the same vein, the Importance-Performance Analysis matrix was utilized for obtaining richer results.

For the qualitative method, two types of focus group and one-on-one interviews and reflective journal entries as instruments were thoroughly explained. The methods of coding and thematic analysis of these qualitative data were explained. The above discussion was summarized in Table 3. 7. The findings of the study will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Table 3.7

Summary of Research Questions, Research Methods, Methods of Data Collection, and Mode of Data Analysis

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods of Data Collection and Types of Data					
RQ1. What is the perception of pre-Registered Student Nurses on Reflective Journal Writing?		**RQ2.** How do Pre-Registered Student Nurses evaluate the effectiveness of on Reflective Journal Writing in development their professional knowledge and skills?		**RQ3.** What levels of reflection do Pre-Registered Student Nurses reveal in their Reflective Journal Writing entries?	
Quantitative Research Approach		**Qualitative Research Approach**		**Qualitative Research Approach**	
Methods of Data Collection	**Types of Data**	**Methods of Data Collection**	**Types of Data**	**Methods of Data Collection**	**Types of Data**
Questionnaire	Numeric Score	Focus Group Interview One-to-one Interviews	Scripts of Data from Transcribed Verbatim	Document	Reflective Journal Entries
Mode of Analysis		**Mode of Analysis**		**Mode of Analysis**	
Descriptive Statistics & IPA Matrix		Inductive & Deductive Content Analysis		Inductive & Deductive Content Analysis	

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE FIRST RESEARCH QUESTION

4.1 Introduction

This study has an attempt to explore reflective journal writing of pre-registered student nurses in a Malaysian context. The analysis of data and the finding pertaining to the first research question will be presented in this chapter. The purpose of this study is to find out the role of Reflective Journal Writing (RJW) in the process of professional development among Pre-Registered Student Nurses (PRSN). With regards to the above, this section presents a disclosure of the participants' perception of the reflective journaling.

For the first research question, a structured questionnaire was adopted, modified according to the objectives and the requirements of this study, and implemented to the pre-registered student nurses. Then, a descriptive analysis was conducted using SPSS (V.24) and then the results were undergone an exploratory research technique of Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) first proposed by Martilla and James (1977).

The main focus of this research question was on how pre-registered student nurses perceive the importance of reflective journaling and their performances of this educational activity in relation to their goals in the process of promoting their professional knowledge and skills. The data contributed through a survey questionnaire has provided a comprehensive insight into the practice of RJW among PRSN. To recap, the first research question is revisited:

Research Question 1*: What is the perception of Pre-Registered Student Nurses of Reflective Journal Writing?*

4.2 The Questionnaire Revisited

A structured questionnaire was adopted (Chong, 2009) and modified for this part of quantitative descriptive study to elicit pre-registered student nurses' perceptions of the reflective journaling. In the questionnaire, the items were designed in regard to revealing the participants' perception and their personal thoughts and opinion on the role of reflective journaling in the process of personal and professional development as well as their clinical learning. Similarly, Constantinou and Kuys (2013) have conducted a mixed method. And for the quantitative part, they used a questionnaire consisting of closed and open-ended questions. With this questionnaire, they evaluated the students' perception on the usefulness of the journals. However, this study administered a closed- ended survey questionnaire consisting of 47 questions in five different sections (Appendix E). By using a questionnaire, the participants shared their feedback and provided their responses based on their knowledge and understanding of reflective journal writing to five major sections of 1) the usefulness of reflective practices, 2) undesirable effects of reflective practice, 3) barriers to good reflection, 4) mentors' role in reflective practice, 5) reflective practice as a tool to assess learning.

Section one contained thirteen items asking about how reflective journal writing encourages the pre-registered student nurses to identify learning situations by being critical, and how RJW motivates them to be more self-directed learners in the time of making sound decisions. This section contained items pertaining to the role

of reflective journaling in the process of personal development such as strategies to avoid automation, empowerment towards own strengths, and awareness towards personal identity, and realization of their weaknesses and their learning needs in the process of professional development. The participants responded to aspects of their perceptions of RJW as an educational tool in the process of knowledge improvement, and effective reflection.

Section two contained thirteen items as well; however, on the contrary to the previous section, these items covered the aspects of undesirable effects of reflective practices. Undesirable effects are in the sense that reflective journaling is regarded as an irrelevant activity unrelated and has little value in the process of learning. PRSN responded to the questions on the psychological stress, frustration, and reviewing negative points of their practice while writing their reflective journals. Section three, with five items, listed the barriers to good reflection. The participants identified their unfamiliarity and uncertainty of reflective journaling as an approach to learning due to inadequate time of briefing. They, also, perceived lack of supportive environment and the element of time constrain as predicaments in the process of effective reflection.

For section four, the participants answered to seven items about their perceptions of the role of mentors in the process of reflection. They identified their needs on the mentors' supervision in recognizing the issues for reflection and assistance in achieving a more critical level of reflection. This section contained items about nurse mentors' knowledge on reflective practices and the use of teaching techniques, such as offering exemplar, providing a guideline to write reflective journals and time for discussion before writing, which can avoid confusion concerning reflective practices. At last, section five with nine items inquired PRSN's

perception of the appropriateness of reflective journals as a tool to assess learning outcome. These items contained elements of assessing the competency of the students and recognizing good practitioners and good reflectors, respectively. Participants responded to the aspects of grading the reflective journals. In this section, there are items to raise the issues of confidentiality of sharing their views and trusting others to express their true reflection and receiving feedback from significant others.

The replies of this survey questionnaire were measured across Likert Scales using three points of Disagree (D) =1, Uncertain (U) =2, Agree (A) =3. The reason of having three points was to have a more consistent reply in regards to the number of the respondent that was only thirty PRSN. The survey questionnaire was analyzed using the SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 24) to present the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) which they were demonstrated in graphs and tables. Moreover, in order to have more scientific results from the Mean for each item, Important-Performance Analysis Method (IPA) was used.

4.3 IPA Matrix Revisited

This study is exploratory research and accordingly; however, the researcher has decided to use Importance-Performance Analyse Matrix (IPA Matrix) to bring a rich elaboration of the numerical findings of the PRSN's perception of reflective journaling. To recap, IPA Matrix is a simple marketing tool for measuring customers' acceptance of certain features of marketing programs originally proposed by Martilla and James (1977). The graphic representation (Figure 3.2, P.111) of IPA allows one to see where the participants' perception and performance could be allocated as – (clock-wise from the upper right) – high/high, high/low, low/low, and low/high in

both criteria of importance and performance. In terms of the IPA assessment of the participants' perceptions and insight, the results of Mean was the criteria for placing the items in each quadrant; that is between 1-2.30 indicating 'low application; between 2.30-3.50 indicating 'moderate application'; and 3.50-5 indicating 'high application' in the category of the qualifier.

The vertical axis displays importance whereas the horizontal axis displays performance for each attribute represented in each table. In that way, the Action Grid views the dynamic relationship of the importance and performance data. In addition to the axes, the quadrants labeled from upper left: QA) Concentrate Here; QB) Good Work; QC) Low Priority; and QD) Possible Overkill (Razpotnik & Švab, 2014). Through this type of graphic representation of data, one can see that the criteria in the first quadrant (QA) require more effort to have a better outcome. In this quadrant, the performance is low, whereas the importance is higher. In the second quadrant (QB), the criteria have high performance and high importance. In the case of reflective journaling, that means every effort toward reflective practice has been successful. Thus, the effort should be concentrated towards maintaining this condition; as the goal is to keep the criteria at the same level. The third quadrant (QC), both performance and importance attributes are low; this situation signifies that certain activity was given low priority by the mentors as well as by the learners; in this case, the reflective activity. And, the fourth quadrant (QD) is named the possible overkill; that is the performance is high, but it is of low importance for the learners. IPA matrix provides an overall view of the situation and allows the educationalists to simply discover the shortfalls from tutors as well as the learners, make decisions more easily, and improve the learning condition. Thus, the concentration of the educational practitioners and policymakers must primarily focus

on the first quadrant or (QA) (Martilla & James, 1977, pp. 77–78). Consequently, the results of the statistical means and standard deviations of each table were placed against the qualifiers (Q) of low (L), moderate (M), and high (H).

4.4 Section One: Usefulness of Reflective Practices

In this section, a series of thirteen items were designed in order to prompt the participants' perceptions regarding the effectiveness and usefulness of reflective journaling in the process of their professional knowledge. In the process of data analyses, the mean and standard deviation were calculated to find out the dimensions of items in relation to identify the usefulness of reflective practices. According to the results driven from SPSS calculation, the section on the usefulness of reflective practice, item-level wise, item number four "I can improve responsibility and accountability in nursing practice through RJW" displayed the highest mean, with the result of (M = 4.57, SD =.50). Accordingly, the results of the scales indicated that only three participants were uncertain, whereas 27 of them show their agreement on the item. The result is consistent with some studies conducted by Chirema (2007) and Chong (2009). They pointed out that student nurses have a positive opinion about using reflective journaling in the process of personal, professional, and clinical learning. In their study on teachers' perception of reflective journaling, Abednia et al. (2013) asserted that the teachers considered RJW has great potential to help them improve their self-awareness and reasoning that is enhancing critical thinking. Regarding self-awareness and reasoning, similarly, this study maintained that the items 1.3 indicating an awareness toward self-directed learning with the M=4.23, SD=.68. And also similar result is for item 1.6 with M=4.23, SD=.50 indicating improving decision-making, which demonstrates the ability of reasoning and logical judgment.

As Mezirow (1991, 2000) asserted, RJW increases the ability of learners' judgment and critical thinking and they become empowered with the ability to make sound decisions in their clinical posting. The descriptive statistics of the result is illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Section One: Usefulness of Reflective Practice

No.	Items	(D) 1	(U) 2	(A) 3	M	SD
1.1	RJW encourages me to make a conscious attempt to identify and learn from what is happening	-	-	30	4.20	.45
1.2	It allows me to view clinical situations from different perspective	-	-	30	4.30	.47
1.3	It motivates me to be a more self-directed learner	1	1	28	4.23	.68
1.4	I can improve responsibility and accountability in nursing practice through RJW	-	3	27	4.57	.50
1.5	It enables me to identify my own learning needs	3	7	20	3.90	.88
1.6	It helps me to improve decision making	-	1	29	4.23	.50
1.7	It helps me to review both positive and negative experiences	-	2	18	4.53	.63
1.8	It encourages critical thinking	-	5	25	4.23	.73
1.9	With experience, the reflective practice develops from a descriptive to a more critical and analytical practice	1	3	26	3.97	.76
1.10	It allows me to apply appropriate theory into nursing practice	1	5	24	4.03	.81
1.11	RJW helps me to identify my mistakes	1	3	26	4.10	.71
1.12	Automation in nursing can be avoided with RJW	2	10	18	3.63	.76
1.13	Reflection plays a role as main elements in the journey from novice to expert nurses.	-	4	26	4.17	.59
Total					**4.17**	**.34**

On the other hands, the lowest mean referred to item number 12 inquiring "automation in nursing can be avoided with RJW" with the result of (M = 3.63, SD = .76). As a result, a number of 18 showed agreement while 10 respondents were uncertain, only two of them showed disagreement with the role of RJW on avoidance of automation in nursing practice. In fact, taking actions out of habitualisation and automation always have been a concern in nursing education. McAllister (2012) stated that the primary impact of habitual act is the risk of dehumanizing patients and their needs. Thus, the benefits of reflective journaling are carefully planned the nursing care, and consciously control the outcome (Chirema, 2007). Moreover, the findings of this study are in line with Chong's (2009) study. In her quantitative study, she found out that the participants had positive perceptions of the usefulness of reflective journaling. In general, with the results of Mean = 4.17 and SD = .34, it can be implied that the Pre-Registered Student Nurses highly in favor of the usefulness of reflective practice of journal writing.

4.4.1 Usefulness of the Reflective Journaling and IPA

It was discussed previously that the reason to utilize the IPA matrix was to provide richer elaboration of the numerical results. Martilla and James (1977) maintained that the use of Action Grid can help novice researchers to present and interpret the data in a more professional way. Action Grid is the graphically displaying the main idea of importance and performance of a task in hands; and for this study, the attributes relating to the usefulness of the reflective journal were displayed. Those studies that used IPA Matrix had commonly stated that Action Grid is the most significant feature of IPA (Alberty & Mihalik, 1989; Williams, 1992; Razpotnik & Švab, 2014). Participants' perception of the usefulness of the reflective

journaling was assessed against the importance and performance of the attributes in Table 4.2. Accordingly, the results of Mean were examined under the Action Grid as well and it was indicated that the attributes scored high (H).

Table 4.2

The Relations of Means, SD, and Qualifier for Usefulness of RJW

Section One: Usefulness of Reflective Journal Writing				
No.	Attributes	Mean	SD	Q
1	Encourages learning	4.20	.45	H
2	Helps to view clinical situation differently	4.30	.47	H
3	Motivates self-directed learning	4.23	.68	H
4	Improves responsibility and accountability	4.57	.50	H
5	Helps to identify learning needs	3.90	.88	H
6	Improves decision making	4.23	.50	H
7	Reviews both positive and negative experience	4.53	.63	H
8	Encourages critical thinking	4.23	.7 3	H
9	Helps to become more analytical	3.97	.76	H
10	Helps to apply theory into practice	4.03	.81	H
11	Identify [my] mistakes	4.10	.71	H
12	Helps to avoid automation	3.63	.76	H
13	Helps to become more expert nurses	4.17	.59	H

Moreover, the attributes graphically displayed by the Action Grid revealed that their positions are in the second quadrant or QB. This indicates that the participants had given high importance and high performance to reflective journaling with all related attributes. This quadrant signifies keeping up with the good work of RJW; that is, the strengths and advantages of this activity should be maintained. Therefore, the nursing educators and policymakers need to continue on the investment of this activity for the better investment of the novice student nurses in clinical posting

Sever (2015). Figure 4.1 illustrates the Action Grid for the usefulness of reflective journal writing.
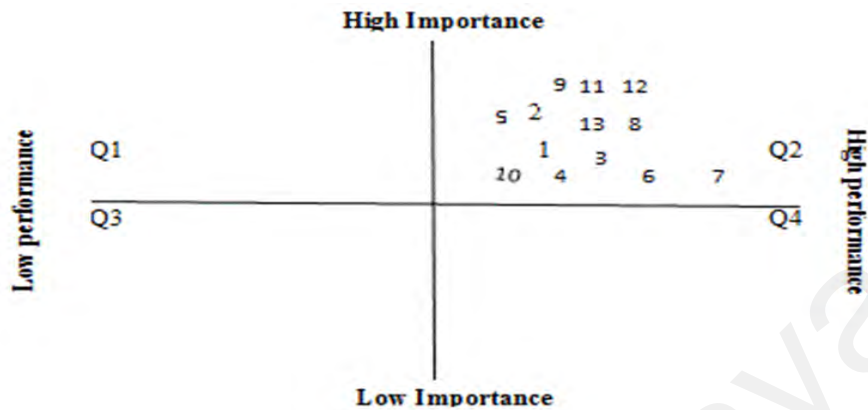
Figure 4.1. Action Grid demonstrating Importance and Performance matrix for usefulness of reflective journal writing

4.5 Section Two: Undesirable Effects of Reflective Practice

This section of the questionnaire, unlike the previous section, discusses the participants' perception of the adverse impacts of the reflective journal writing. Section two of the questionnaire consisted of 13 items with which the dimensions were used to identify the perception of the pre-registered student nurses of the undesirable effects of the reflective practice. The mean and standard deviation were similarly calculated for the purpose of descriptive analysis.

According to results demonstrated in Table 4.3, item three: "RJW causes me to practice routine nursing care", demonstrates with the highest mean of M = 3.77 and SD =.77. Based on this, the highest number of agreed respondents (n=23) belonged to this item. This finding is significant; however, it is very surprising. This result could be considered as an unexpected one, or serendipity of the result for this study. When some studies, in my knowledge, claim that reflective journaling prevents

student nurses from automation or routine work as a positive effect of reflective writing (e.g. Plack et al., 2009; Chirema 2007; Jasper, 1999; Mezirow, 2000), the participants for this study perceive reflective journaling as a cause that makes them practice routine nursing care. It could mean that they look at reflective practice as a means for writing what is "right" in nursing care. Allan and Driscoll (2014) believed that the students are aware of the assessment of their self-evaluation of their learning based on their reflective journals, so, the novice student nurses try to follow the routine nursing care. The respondents thought 'routine' is a positive behavior in nursing practice. However, it can be argued that the purpose of reflective journaling is to avoid routine nursing care to avoid de-humanization of the patient (McAllister, 2012). Thorp (2004) asserted that nurse educators must promote professional nursing practice to avoid the routine nursing practice.

On the other hands, the lowest mean appeared for the item number four: "My learning in clinical posting is unrelated to RJW" with the result of M = 2.13 and SD = .63. Based on this finding, the majority of respondents showed disagreement (n=22), whereas no respondent showed agreement on this item. The finding implied that RJW plays a role in clinical learning for PRSN. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Oldland et al. (2017) on learners' perception of written reflection. They admitted that through reflective journaling they can shape their learning style and improve their professional clinical behavior. This result also coincides with a study conducted in another university in Malaysia.

Among many studies conducted on learning style, the one with Malaysian pre-clinical medical students, the VARK model as a learning style was introduced by SEGI University in 2014. In this study, female students show to be more (R), that is they prefer more Reading and writing as their dominant learning style over (K) of

being in favor of Kinaesthetic that is more common among male students. We can claim that the participants in this study also fall in a group of writing as a preferred model of learning style. These results indicated that participants perceive reflective journaling very much related to their clinical learning. These results are aligned with the findings in other studies namely, Milinkovic and Fields (2005) and Chirema (2007).

Table 4.3

Section Two: Undesirable Effects of Reflective Practice

No.	Items	(D) 1	(U) 2	(A) 3	M	SD
2.1	The process can be manipulated to meet the expected outcome of the practice	3	20	17	3.47	.68
2.2	RJW is an irrelevant method to assess my clinical ability	17	8	5	2.60	.77
2.3	RJW causes me to practice routine nursing care	4	3	23	3.77	.77
2.4	My learning in clinical posting is unrelated to RJW	22	8	-	2.13	.63
2.5	RJW task has no value in clinical practice	14	10	16	2.90	.88
2.6	RJW has little place for me to be more critical towards my nursing practice as well as others'	10	6	17	3.30	1.02
2.7	Reflective practice may cause psychological stress	22	3	5	2.30	.92
2.8	RJW task has little place in clinical practice	4	12	14	3.57	.76
2.9	With RJW, I develop to be descriptive in my nursing practice	4	7	21	3.57	.82
2.10	I usually reflect on negative issues.	6	11	13	3.30	.88
2.11	RJW makes me reflect on my nursing care	4	5	21	3.67	.84
2.12	I feel frustrated when I am not able to solve problems that were identified during reflection	3	10	17	3.67	.92
2.13	RJW helps me to review only my negative points of my practice	12	9	9	2.93	1.01
	Total				**3.15**	**.40**

In general, this section on the undesirable effects of reflective practice among student' nurses showed a total mean of M = 3.15 and SD = .40. This result in compare with the result of the previous section with a total mean of M= 4.17 is very low which indicates the PRSN's perception is positive regarding reflective journaling in the process of professional learning. In other words, the majority of participants agreed with the usefulness of reflective practice, their perception about the undesirable effects of reflective practice showed differently. Although both sections have similar numbers of items (n=13), the results indicated by total mean represented significant differences; that is, this section has the lower mean of (M=3.15) than the section one. Moreover, the standard deviation of this category is 0.40 that shows scores of participants are more scattered. The discussion above is consistent with some studies conducted by Chirema (2007), Chong (2009) that indicated that the student nurses have a positive opinion about the usefulness of reflective journaling in the process of personal, professional, and clinical learning. The results of the descriptive statistics for the undesirability of reflective journal writing are illustrated in Table 4.3.

4.5.1 Undesirability of Reflective Journal Writing and IPA

This part of section two discusses the steps were taken to get an IPA assessment regarding the participants' perceptions on the undesirability of reflective journaling. The use of IPA is to provide more explanation of the numerical results of the undesirability of RJW among PRSN which will be graphically displayed against the Action Grid of importance and performance to gain the interpretation of the data in more professional way. According to the results of the mean, the qualifiers fall in different quadrants. That is, when the results of mean represented high importance and high performance, they were labelled (H) in the qualifier category and they were

placed in the second quadrant or (QB) and some results were relatively placed on the fourth quadrant or (QD). Further, if the results of mean represent Low (L); it indicates that the respondents perceived these attributes as low importance and low performance. That is, they gave low priority in performing the activity and they considered them not important. In this case, the attributes were placed in the third quadrant or (QC). Furthermore, the results of mean represented high importance but low performance, the attributes were received the qualifier of Medium (M) and they were placed in the first quadrant where the concentration must be guaranteed to take actions towards possible changes and strategies. Table 4.4 illustrates the means for the participants' responses and qualifiers.

Table 4.4

The Relation of Means, SD, and Qualifier for Undesirable Effects of RJW

Section Two: Undesirable Effects of Reflective Practice

No.	Attributes	Mean	SD	Q
1	Possible manipulation to get desire outcome	3.47	.68	M
2	Irrelevant for clinical assessment	2.60	.77	M
3	Causes routine nursing care	3.77	.77	H
4	RJW is unrelated to clinical learning	2.13	.63	L
5	Had no value in clinical practice	2.90	.88	M
6	Little place to be critical towards my and others' practice	3.30	1.02	M
7	Causes psychological stress	2.30	.92	L
8	Has little place in nursing practice	3.57	.76	H
9	Makes me to be descriptive	3.57	.82	H
10	Causes me to reflect on negative issues	3.30	.88	M
11	Makes me reflect on my practice	3.67	.84	M
12	Causes frustration for not being able to solve problem	3.67	.92	H
13	Makes me to reflect only on negative points	2.93	1.01	M

The Action Grid demonstrates Importance and Performance data in relation to the means in Figure 4.2. The illustration of the data for this part shows that the means are scattered in all four quadrants, and relatively with the same number. It can be concluded that the participants' perceptions of this category are different. According to Martilla and James (1977), the attributes on the third quadrant (QC) are not important to consider; whereas the fourth quadrant (QD) demonstrates that the attributes carry low importance but high performance.
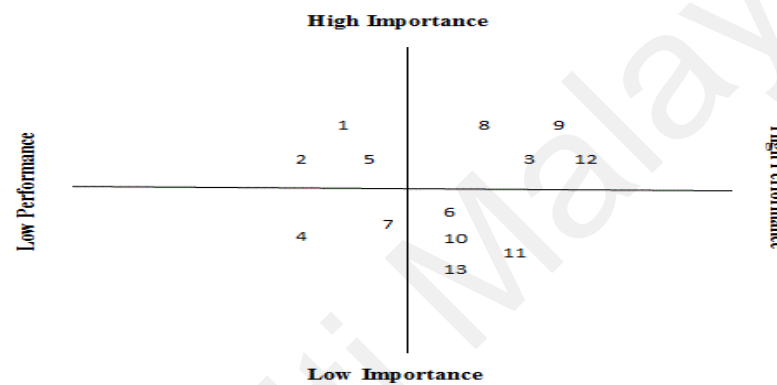
Figure 4.2. Action Grid demonstrating Importance and Performance matrix for undesirable effects of reflective journal writing

According to the findings, the first quadrant (QA) welcomes the results of three attributes of No. 1 possible manipulation to get desire outcome, No.2 irrelevancy to assessment and No.5 lack of value in clinical practice. The findings implied that there should be some changes in policy regarding reflective practice according to the quality of the first quadrant. Furthermore, the nurse mentors should give high priority to change the strategies towards reflective journaling. Coward (2011) stated that one of the reasons why the student nurses feel negative about reflective journaling is that it is used as an assessment tool and their clinical performance was assessed by their reflective journals; so they write what the mentors like to hear (Chirema, 2007). In other words, the nurse tutors or mentors should concentrate on the reason(s) for

manipulation in writing reflective journals. In fact, some studies have pointed out the element of 'trust' as the motive to manipulate in their reflective journaling (Chirema, 2007; Varagona & Hold, 2019; Tarrant, 2013). Further, the mentors should take some strategies to focus on why the student nurses feel their reflective journal has little relation with their clinical assessment. This idea receives support from the literature on the metaphor 'good reflectors are not necessarily good practitioners' coined initially by Mezirow (1999). Moreover, the mentors can judge the student nurses' competence and professionalism with other strategies. The element of lack of professional trust, manipulation in their journaling, and not writing the real truth of the real-life incident in their journals are the reasons why reflection should not be used as an assessment tool (Coward, 2011). Moreover, Braine (2009) maintained that in case of absence of assessment, the students raised the issue of reason for doing this assignment. If the ability to practice reflectivity is perceived important in the process of professionalism, then the nurse mentors must address the issues of how to teach and how students develop this skill.

On the other hands, the second quadrant or (QB) was the location for four attributes of number 3, 8, 9, and 12; since the mean of the attributes were above 3.50 (M >3.50), they were categorized as H for the qualifier. According to the results, mentors should keep up with the good work. In the same vein, Braine (2009) maintained that in case of absence of assessment, the students raised the issue of reason for doing this assignment. If ability to practice reflectivity is perceived important in the process of professionalism, then the nurse mentors must address the issues of how to teach and how students develop this skill. She also asserted that reflection is not an easy skill to develop and it is time-consuming. However, she

advocated that student nurses need carefully planned strategies to develop the skill of reflection.

Similarly, the attributes number 6, 10, 11, and 13 were placed in (QD) refer to being reflective and to show criticality to others and their practice. As these are positive aspects of reflection, however, mentors or nurse mentors could see the student nurses have given low importance to these attributes, still the performance is high. In the case of the fourth quadrant (QD), the attributes are perceived as low importance but high performance. This finding supports the question raised by Coward (2012) on the validity of reflective journal in nursing education. However, she maintained that the inquiry to develop critical thinking skills is that the nurse educators help students to be more reflective to move away from the merely routine nursing tasks to the more professional status of nursing. These results implied that the student nurses give high priority in performing the reflective journaling; however, they are not fully aware of the importance of this reflective activity.

According to the findings, the attributes of number four "RJW is unrelated to clinical learning" and number seven "RJW causes psychological stress" were placed in the third quadrant (QC). The participants perceived these attributes as low importance and low performance and considered them as low priority. In this regard, Mahlanze and Sibiya (2017) asserted that nurse mentors should take into consideration their student nurses' language abilities in expressing their feelings in their reflective journals. And for the student nurses to develop and improve faster in clinical learning, they need an environment that is conducive with appropriate guidance that they feel welcomed and confident.

4.6 Section Three: Barriers to Good Reflection

Section three of the survey questionnaire consisted of five items designed to prompt the participants' perceptions regarding the barriers to good reflection. Studies on reflection and reflective journaling have identified certain barriers that inhibit learners to participate in reflective journaling. For instance, Azer (2008) stated that the learners face some challenges to connect theory with practice in the process of identifying their learning needs. The participants in the study conducted by Abednia et al. (2013) expressed their concerns of RJW regarding the high demand of preparations it requires prior to class discussions. These concerns were mainly conveyed because of the learners' lack of interest and thoughtfulness to the tutor's comments on their journals. Other barriers discussed in the literature were the issue of writing reflective journals is time-consuming (Coward, 2011; Chirema, 2007), inability to reflect due to the lack of trust and support from the nurse mentors (Chirema, 2007) and insufficient briefing in the tutorial for reflection (Chong, 2009).

However, for this section of the survey questionnaire, the items were created from the most common known complaints from the student nurses regarding RJW. Accordingly, the most common five items were designed to form this section to capture any possible inhibition for good reflection perceived from the novice student nurses to project effective reflection; that is, the precursor of reflective journaling. After receiving the questionnaire from the participants, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for the purpose of descriptive analysis.

Comparable to other studies, among many barriers mentioned for this section, item number four was "Time constrains" with the highest mean of (M = 3.47, SD =.82) was considered the highest barrier to produce a good reflective journal. Based

on the results, 18 participants agreed upon the issue of times pressures; whereas seven students showed uncertainty and five participants showed disagreement upon the issue of time constraint for an effective reflection. The issue of "time constraint" or "lack of time" or "have not enough time" appeared in almost every study on reflective writing (e.g. McAllister, 2012; Abednia et al., 2013; Coward, 2011). For instance, Chimera (2007) has conducted a study with pre-registered student nurses and their teacher and preceptors; there, she concluded that some respondents did not believe it was necessary to write a journal as it is very time-consuming.

On the other hand, the lowest mean was for the item number two, "The briefing of reflective practice was not adequate" with M = 2.70 and SD = .84. Accordingly, further analysis indicated that 16 respondents disagreed, while seven respondents were uncertain and seven showed agreement upon the issue of inadequacy of briefing for reflective practice. Although the high number of participants thought that the instructions given to them about reflective journaling were adequate, still the time factor is the major barrier to good reflection. Further, the total mean of M = 3.12, SD = .54 indicated that the lowest mean refers to barrier to good reflection among other components of reflective journaling. Since the mean does not give information about the data dispersion, the standard deviation shows how the highest amount of dispersion among individual perceptions toward barrier to good reflection. Although this standard deviation does not seem much in comparison with the range of scores, in comparison to other components of reflective journaling, it shows the highest standard deviation, which means the range of perception between the highest and the lowest scores has been high among participants. Moreover, by taking the number of items into consideration that is only five items, the differences seem very notable. That is, the least number of items has a higher standard deviation. Therefore, it is

expected that the scores of the participants' perception toward barriers to good reflection to show less deviation than the other section like the usefulness of reflective practice, which contained 13 items, but it shows otherwise. The summary of descriptive statistics results of the components demonstrated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Section Three: Barriers to Good Reflection among Pre-Registered Students Nurses

No.	Items	(D) 1	(U) 2	(A) 3	M	SD
3.1	Uncertainty of using an unfamiliar learning approach	3	17	12	3.23	.63
3.2	The briefing of reflective practice was not adequate	16	7	7	2.70	.84
3.3	Lack of supportive environment	9	8	13	3.13	.86
3.4	Time constrains	5	7	18	3.47	.82
3.5	Unable to identify learning issues to reflect upon	7	15	8	3.07	.78
Total					**3.12**	**.54**

4.6.1 Barriers to Good Reflection and IPA

This part of section three discusses the steps were taken to get an IPA assessment regarding the participants' perceptions on the issues of barriers to good reflection to reflective journaling. With the use of IPA more explanation provided over the numerical results. To gain the interpretation of the data in a more professional way, the result will be graphically displayed with the help of Action

Grid of importance and performance matrix. Table 4.6 illustrates the results of that all fall in the moderate qualifier category.

Table 4.6

The Relation of Means, SD, and Qualifier for Barriers to Good Reflection

Section Three: Barriers to Good Reflection

No.	Attributes	M	SD	Q
1	Uncertain & unfamiliar of using reflection for learning	3.23	.63	M
2	Inadequate briefing on reflective practice	2.70	.84	M
3	Lack of supportive environment	3.13	.86	M
4	Time constrain	3.47	.82	M
5	Unable to identify learning issues to reflect upon	3.07	.78	M

As shown in Figure 4.3, the attributes of barriers to good reflection were categorized as moderate and they were placed in the first or (QA) and the fourth quadrants or (QD). This simply implied that the attributes of uncertainty and unfamiliarity of using reflection, inadequate briefing, and lack of supportive environment are given high importance which in return rated low performance. It can be concluded that being familiar to use reflection for learning requires adequate briefing and support which in sense of performance it was very low but important. Having this feeling towards reflection causes the participants to think that performing the reflective writing is time-consuming, but it receives low importance in rating. Likewise, rating for their inability to identify issues to reflect upon gives a high performance on their side, but with low importance. The fourth quadrant is known as 'possible overkill', it suggests of over-performance with no improvement in the

learners' performance. Therefore, appropriate effort should be taken to divert this condition to a more appropriate one. The Action Grid demonstrates Importance and Performance data in relation to barriers to good reflection in Figure 4.3.
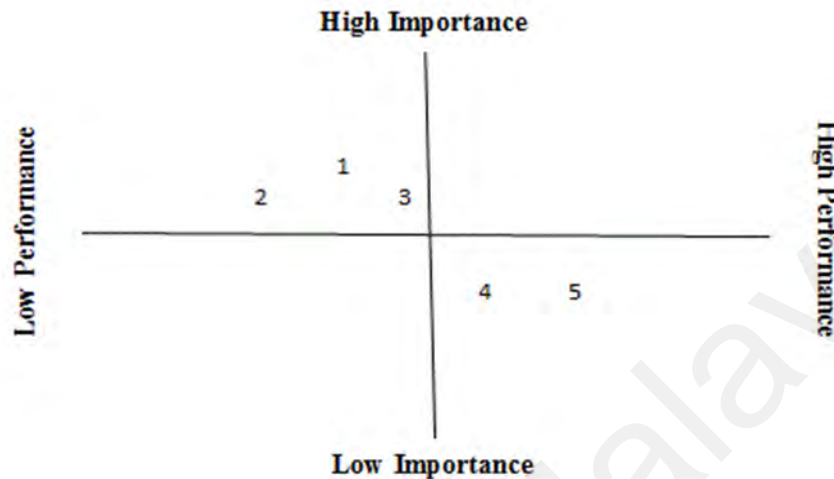
Figure 4.3. Action Grid demonstrating Importance and Performance matrix for barriers to good reflection

4.7 Section Four: Mentors in Reflective Practice

In this section, "mentors" referred to the nurse tutors who teach and train student nurses as well as shape the academic life of pre-registered student nurses. In this study nurse mentors, nurse tutors, and nurse educators are used interchangeably. In the literature of reflection and reflective writing, they are named preceptors, supervisors, facilitators, and advisors for reflection activities. As far as reflection concerns, the nurse mentors play different rules in PRSN's educational life. In order to facilitate reflection, nursing mentors must be aware and knowledgeable of the levels of reflection and the students' ability to process information through reflection (Kear, 2013; Duffy, 2008; Plack, 2005). Consequently, mentoring to assist learners to reflect is the strategy to empower the learners to get the advantage of reflection for

the sake of enhanced learning. Regarding the role of the nurse mentor, section four of the questionnaire will discuss the role of nurse mentors in reflective journaling.

The large size of studies claimed that toward the increased use of reflective writing in nursing education, in particular, the necessity of monitoring its implementation carries the same level of importance (Coward, 2011; Chirema 2007; Mann et al., 2009). Hence, this section of the questionnaire with seven items designated for the mentor's role in reflective journaling. Similar to the previous section, this section was undergone a descriptive analysis with which the mean and standard deviation were calculated to identify the dimensions and describe the effect of the mentors in reflective practice from the lenses of the participants.

According to the result demonstrated in the Table 4.7, the item number three, "I need assistance from my mentors to help me to achieve a more critical level of reflection", projected with the highest mean of M = 4.33 and SD =.55. Based on the table, it showed that although there was no result for disagreement, 29 students agreed, whereas only one student was uncertain towards the mentorship in reflective practice. In section three of the questionnaire on the barriers for good reflection it was indicated that participants had strong agreement that they had received sufficient briefing by mentors. With the above result on the mentor's assistant for reflection supports the idea that the mentor is a sole advisor to assist the student nurses in their reflection during and after the clinical posting for the sake of reflective journaling. This result is supported by the study conducted among Malaysian undergraduates. Accordingly, Malaysian educationalists found that Malaysian students are not independent enough (Farida, 1995 as cited in Maesin et al, 2009), that is they are expected to be "spoon-fed" with information. In Mezirow's words "the adult educator must recognize both the learner's objectives and goal; the objective is to

function more autonomously and responsible learner" (Mezirow, 1997, p.8). This ability can be promoted with mentors' feedback and support. Feedback coming from nurse mentors, both verbal and non-verbal, is a way of promoting the development of qualified and self-directed learners.

The results also indicated that participants' perception is around the mean and there are low divergences among participants regarding the role of mentors in reflective practice. This result has also specified in other studies. Although reflection is a highly personal process, the role of mentors as a facilitator is particularly important. When student nurses are exploring some incidents, or observing an event, and they see it as a critical incident, the mentor must see it as reflection, as Moon (2000, p.167) believes this situation is "...valued personal experience...which plays a role in self-development and emancipation". The role of a mentor in reflective practices, particularly in reflective journaling, is dominated initially with the thoughts of an atmosphere of trust, a supportive environment that is necessary in this type of activity. According to Duffy (2009), the quality of reflection in reflective journals strongly based on the "trust" and "confidence" that the student nurses feel of their mentors. In this situation, their feeling can promote or prohibit effective reflection. Likewise, Varagona and Hold, (2019) believed that the positive academic relationship between mentors and student nurses is when 'trust' is the main element and the most important factor in the positive learning outcome of reflective journaling.

On the other hand, the lowest mean is for the item number four (M = 4.03 and SD = .67), "The different mentors should be consistent in giving advice on reflection, to avoid confusion." As far as briefing form mentors concerned, a high number of participants (n=26) showed agreement on the item for inconsistency among mentors.

In this regard, Chirema (2007) stated the reasons for the learners' inability to reflect are the lack of trust and support from the mentors necessary for learning to occur.

In general, the total mean for the role of mentors in reflective practice as the pre-registered student nurses perceived appeared high with M = 4.15 and SD = .41. Table 4.7 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of pre-registered student nurses' perceptions on mentors in reflective practices.

Table 4.7

Section Four: Mentors in Reflective Practice

No.	Items	(D) 1	(U) 2	(A) 3	M	SD
4.1	Supervision by mentor for the introduction of reflection is essential	1	3	26	4.13	.73
4.2	I need my mentor' assistance to help me to identify issues for reflection	1	2	27	4.13	.68
4.3	I need assistance from the mentor to help me to achieve a more critical level of reflection	-	1	29	4.33	.55
4.4	The different mentors should be consistent in giving advice on reflection, to avoid confusion	1	3	26	4.03	.67
4.5	Mentors should be equipped with knowledge on reflective practice	-	1	29	4.27	.52
4.6	Reflection can be elicited through discussions with mentors	-	2	28	4.10	.40
4.7	One technique to encourage me to reflect is to have RJW exemplars	1	4	25	4.07	.74
Total					**4.15**	**.41**

4.7.1 Role of Mentors in Reflective Journal Writing and IPA

This part of section four discusses the steps taken to get IPA assessment regarding the participants' perceptions on the role of mentors in reflective journal writing. Similar to the previous sections, to get more scientific explanation of the numerical results this part also uses IPA matrix, a self-explanatory graphic of Action 4.7.1 Role of Mentors in Reflective Journal Writing and IPA

This part of section four discusses the steps taken to get IPA assessment regarding the participants' perceptions on the role of mentors in reflective journal writing. Similar to the previous sections, to get more scientific explanation of the numerical results this part also uses IPA matrix, a self-explanatory graphic of Action Grid of importance and performance matrix pertaining to the role of mentors in RJW. According to the results of mean, all the attributes received high (H) as for qualifier and they occupied the second quadrant or (QB). This finding indicates that the role of mentors in reflection carries high in importance and high in performance in IPA Matrix. These results praise the importance of the mentor's role in helping the student nurses to transfer knowledge attained in the classroom to clinical arena. Over all, the quality of mentoring the student nurses and giving feedback are parts of effective implementation of reflective journal writing (Rassaei, 2015). In this regard, Bjerkvik and Hill (2019, p.39) pointed out that "becoming a nurse is not simply a consequence of having access to a certain amount of knowledge and a tool kit of skills. Students required mentoring and support in their transformation from students to professional nurses." Hence, there is a need for better and effective mentoring on reflection and on emotional adaptation to help student nurses' professional self-development. Novice student nurses need mentoring in reflection to shift their focus

on cognitive skills from simply doing the nursing tasks to becoming a nurse. Table 4.8 illustrates the IPA results that show all attributes carry high qualifier category.

Table 4.8

The Relation of Means, SD, and Qualifier for Mentors in Reflective Practice

Section Four: Mentors' Roles in Reflective Practice

No.	Attributes	M	SD	Q
1	Mentor supervision and introduction is essential	4.13	.73	H
2	Need mentor assistance to identify issues to reflect	4.13	.68	H
3	Need mentor assistance to be more critical	4.33	.55	H
4	No consistency between mentors causes confusion	4.03	.67	H
5	Mentors' knowledge on reflection is necessary	4.27	.52	H
6	Discussion with mentors elicits reflection	4.10	.40	H
7	Having exemplar of RJW can be an encouraging technique	4.07	.74	H

With this IPA result, mentors or nurse tutors should keep up with their good work. The emphasis of this attribute is that mentors should provide supervision and assistance to the students in reflection and find ways to help their students to reflect effectively. That is, it requires them to be good reflectors to be able to help the students. To support the above idea, Mezirow (1999) reiterated that the learning has occurred by being able to continually reflect upon the experiences and skills. However, mentors are needed to enable the learners to solve the problem and make decisions and make the learning part of his/her own (Jasper, 1999; Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Cranton, 2000). Figure 4.4 shows the Action Grid demonstrating

importance and performance rating for the role of mentors in reflective practice.
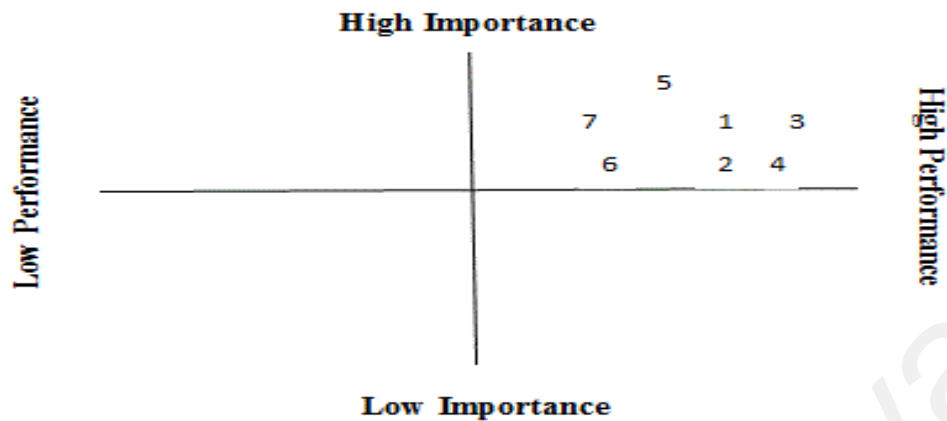
Figure 4.4. Action Grid demonstrating importance and performance matrix for mentors' roles in reflective practice

4.8 Section Five: Reflective Journals as a Tool to Assess Learning

The subject of using RJW for the learning assessment has been the subject of debate in the literature of reflection and reflective activity. However, RJW has been used to evaluate PRSN's progress in their educational endeavor. Coward (2011) stated that using the reflective journal as a method of assessment is a major problem. In this regard, Kim (2013) asserted that it would be helpful for the learners to clarify what assessment criteria are used to evaluate their performance on the reflective journals. Moreover, in the assessment practice through RJW, mentors commonly utilized some summative feedback which some students agree and for some it causes disappointment. Therefore, this study has an attempt to investigate the participants' perception of the assessment role of RJW.

For this part of the study, section five of the questionnaire consisted of nine items designed to statistically describe the PRSN's perceptions of appropriateness of using RJW for assessment purposes. As for descriptive analysis, mean and standard

deviation were used to identify the dimensions of the appropriateness of reflective journals as a tool to assess the learning outcome of PRSN. According to Table 4.9, it indicates that the highest mean belonged to the item number five "I need feedback on my reflective practice report", with the results of M = 4.60 and SD=.50. This item received the highest agreements among the participants. Almost all of the participants (n=30) exclaimed that they are in a need for feedback from their mentors following writing journals. The subject of feedback was discussed in other studies. For instance, Oldland et al (2017) have revealed that receiving feedback upon reflection is required for encouraging deep learning and developing confidence which led to the development of professional and high quality of nursing practice. Similarly, McCready (2007) maintained that the reflective journal as an assessment tool can be evidence of the high quality of care and professional competence in practice.

Based on the same calculation, however, the lowest results of M = 3.27 and SD = 1.17 referred to the item number seven "I write reflective journal on what is expected rather than what was truly felt." It can be implied that the participants write about the real-life event in their RJ as it was expected to be seen or perceived by their mentors. In consistent with other studies, the fact of "trusting and believing others" among student nurses to write everything is a common fact. That is, they don't believe to tell their mentors or to write complete truth about the real-life events in their clinical posting (Chirema, 2007).

Varagona and Hold (2019) asserted that to gain students' trust and avoid losing their trust, the nurse tutors need to examine their personal trait, words and behaviours in order to establish a caring student-tutor relationship built on trust. Likewise, Tarrant, (2013) reiterated that reflection could develop a range of skills in a person.

According to him, in the case of PRSN they can describe their nursing practice in a reflective and thoughtful way, they become able to express their thoughts, and able to trust other person a result of reflective practice.

Table 4.9

Section Five: The Reflective Practice as an Assessment Tool of Learning Outcome

No.	Items	(D) 1	(U) 2	(A) 3	M	SD
5.1	The result of assessment correlates with the actual competency of students in nursing practice	-	7	23	3.83	.53
5.2	A good reflective practitioner does not necessarily mean a good practitioner	5	5	20	3.67	.96
5.3	The guideline on reflective practice given to students is clear and does not require further clarification	3	8	19	3.60	.77
5.4	The time given to complete the reflective report is sufficient	2	8	20	3.73	.78
5.5	I need feedback on my reflective practice report	-	-	30	4.60	.50
5.6	Feedback on the reflection assessment is inconsistent with the grade given	2	7	21	3.77	.90
5.7	I write RJ on what is expected rather than what was truly felt	11	6	13	3.27	1.17
5.8	Looking back on certain nursing practice improves my practice in future	-	1	29	4.33	.55
5.9	Grading is a reason that RJ is submitted	4	6	20	3.67	.88
Total					**3.83**	**.36**

However, the result for the item number seven signified inconsistency with what they elaborated in their interviews. This denial from the participants could have explained their lack of trust in the researcher as an outsider. This idea was directly

reflected in their interviews, however, as they literally say: we don't trust others to write the truth. Nouri, for example, said: "I don't trust my nurse tutor or staff nurses to write everything…..." Likewise, Anna almost repeated: "I don't trust my nurse tutor to tell the truth. I am afraid to tell the truth in case of losing my face." In fact, the main reason that was expressed by the participants was their unwillingness to be judged by their mentors as incompetent learners.

In general, this section evaluated the appropriateness of reflective journaling as a tool to assess learning outcomes among PRSN. The statistical analysis indicated that the total mean of M = .38 is lower than the mean for the category of the usefulness of reflective practice; however, the standard deviation is higher (SD=3.6). Therefore, we can claim that most participants' perception appears around the mean that represents not many discrepancies among the participants in regard to their perception toward the use of reflective journaling for assessing their learning outcome. Having to consider the number of items in this category (n=9) that is lower than category of the usefulness of reflective practice and undesirable effects of reflective practice, both with 13 items; it can be concluded that participants' perception of reflective journaling as a tool of assessment is positive. In this regard, Hargreaves (2004, p. 201) argued, "the practice of using reflective narrative (writing) as an assessment tool on professional education courses can be problematic." She maintains that requiring students to produce reflective writing for assessment purposes, they intend to write more acceptable rather than a truthful piece of writing. Table 4.9 illustrates the PRSN's perception of the appropriateness of using RJW as an assessment tool for their clinical learning outcome.

4.8.1 Reflective Journal Writing as an Assessment Tool and IPA

The results of relation between clinical assessment and reflective practice revealed high similarity with the previous category on the mentors' role. The results of mean was rated high (H) according to the qualifier for both importance and performance. Although the qualifier was high for all components, number five stood relatively higher among other criteria with means of 4.60. This criterion refers to the feedback the student nurses require for their reflective report. They believed if reflective journaling was for learning assessment, it should be a way that they could see their progress in relation to nursing care and journaling. They were all aware of this fact that their writing is being assessed for 10% of their mark for the course of "Fundamental of Nursing II"; but receiving feedback is more important than simply receiving passing marks. In short, using reflective journals for learning assessment or evaluating student nurses' competence in practicum is open to debate.

In fact, Benner (1984) stated that competence is an objective concept and can be measured upon performance of skills and thus, PRSN try to improve their ability in reflection as well as in reflective journal writing. Table 4.10 illustrates the IPA results that show all attributes fall in the high qualifier category.

According to the results of means, all the components were placed in the second quadrant (QB) of high importance and high performance. In their interviews and in their reflective journals, PRSN has acknowledged the assessment role of reflective writing. In one instance, one of the participants wrote in her journal, I write about this real event in my clinical posting to tell my tutor how well I did my nursing task and how I did it alone. However, she didn't receive feedback as she had

expected from her nurse tutor. It is worth mentioning that this study has no intention to specifically underline the assessment aspect of reflective journaling.

Table 4.10

The Relation of Means, SD, and Qualifier for Reflective Practice as an Assessment Tool of Learning Outcome

No.	Attributes	M	SD	Q
	Section five: The Reflective Practice as an Assessment Tool of Learning Outcome			
1	The result of assessment correlates with students' competency	3.83	.53	H
2	No relation between good reflector and good practitioner	3.67	.96	H
3	The guideline is clear for students to reflect	3.60	.77	H
4	Time to complete the reflective report is sufficient	3.73	.78	H
5	I need feedback on my reflective report	4.60	.50	H
6	No consistency between feedback and the grade	3.77	.90	H
7	I write in RJW on what is expected not what truly felt	3.27	1.17	H
8	Looking back on certain nursing practice improves my nursing practice	4.33	.55	H
9	Grading is a reason to submit RJW	3.67	.88	H

A brief account of assessment was to convey this message that the researcher has thought of the assessment aspect of reflective journaling. With this, the discussion about the perceptions of Malaysian pre-registered student nurses with regards to Importance and Performance Analysis come to end with the following summary. Figure 4.5 illustrates the result of IPA for this section.
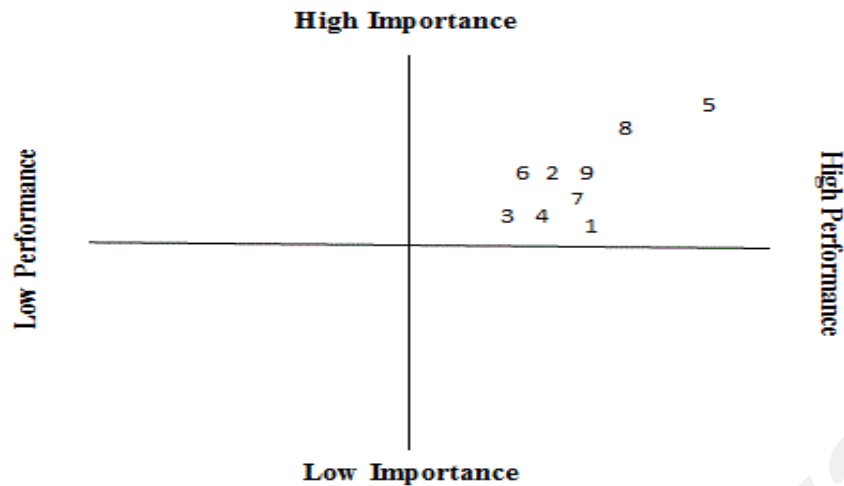
Figure 4.5. Action Grid demonstrating importance and performance data for the reflective journaling as an assessment tool for learning outcome

4.9 Summary of the Discussion of the First Research Question

This chapter was designed to analyze the data and the findings of a survey questionnaire to answer the first research question. The main purpose of this part of the quantitative descriptive study was to see how the participants perceive the role of reflective journaling on the process of their personal and professional development as well as their clinical learning. In order to study PRSN's perception, a structured questionnaire was adopted and modified to elicit the participants' insights and opinions of reflective journal writing. The survey questionnaire consisted of five sections. Section one was on the usefulness of reflective journaling signified with the highest total mean of M=4.17. Section two was on the undesirable effects of reflective journaling indicated with the second lowest total mean of M= 3.15. Section three was on barriers to good reflection represents the lowest total mean of M=3.12. Section four was on the role of mentors in reflective journaling denotes with the second highest total mean of M=4.15. The last section was on reflective journaling as a tool to assess learning outcomes denotes the total mean of M= 3.85.

Table 4.11

Summary of Descriptive Statistics

No.	Order	Sections	No. of Items	Mean	SD
1	1	Usefulness of Reflective Journaling	13	4.17	.34
2	4	Undesirable effects of reflective practice	13	3.15	.40
3	5	Barriers to good Reflection	5	3.12	.53
4	2	Mentors in reflective practice	7	4.15	.41
5	3	Appropriateness of RJ in learning assessment	9	3.85	.36

Through inter and intra-case analysis, the first research question was replies and the findings indicate that the participants perceived RJW as an activity in the process of their professional development. With regard to the different sections of the survey questionnaire, the summary of the results of the mean is illustrated in Table 4.11. According to Table 4.11, the participants perceive RJW useful with the highest mean of 4.17, the next was their perception of the role of mentor with M=4.15 followed by RJW as a tool with M=3.83. Two other categories showed similar results of M=3.15 for undesirable effects of RJW and M=3.12 the barriers to good reflection.
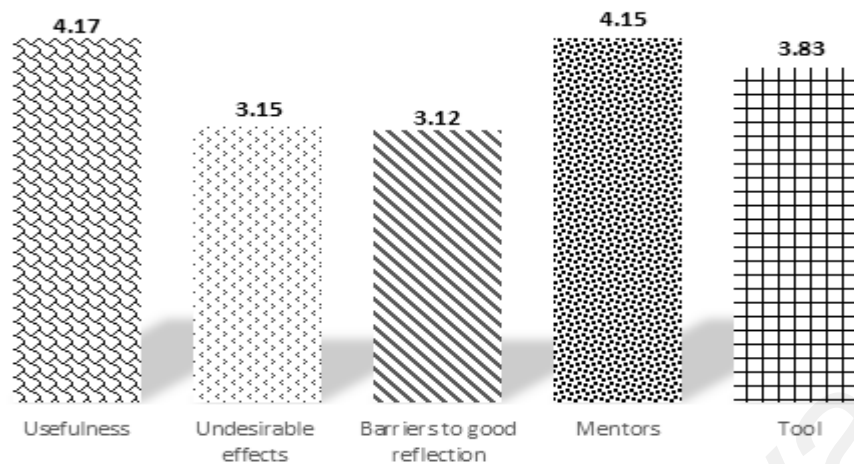
Figure 4.6. Summary of perception of the RJW among PRSN

Therefore, from the results obtained through the questionnaire, it is strongly advocated that reflective journal writing is useful in respect to an educational activity that assist the pre-registered student nurses to develop their professional skills and knowledge. In short, Figure 4.6 is the graphic representation of the summary of the discussion on Pre-registered student nurses' perception of reflective journal writing.

Beside conventional descriptive statistical analysis on the perceptions of the pre-registered student nurses and discussion pertaining to the findings for each section of the survey questionnaire, further discussion of the findings was conducted with the use of Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) Matrix. The IPA technique brought to light a new perspective to the studies on reflection in general and reflective journal writing in particular. Through utilizing IPA Matrix, evaluation of the participants' perceptions become not only less challenging, but also make it possible to graphically demonstrate the results with the Action Grid containing four quadrants. Apart from the category of undesirable effects of reflective journal writing that occupies all four quadrants, other categories either occupied at high (H) or

middle (M) quadrants. All Action Grids evaluated various attributes and this evaluation can support other studies on the positive impact of reflective journal writing in the process of developing professional knowledge and skills among PRSN.

According to the results, among 47 items or attributes in the survey questionnaire, 36 were placed in the second quadrant or (QB) that indicates 'keep up with the good work'. It signifies that participants perceived RJW as high importance that requires high performance. As for the other attributes, they have been roomed in the other quadrants; that is a number of five attributes in the first quadrant or (QA), 'concentrate here' that indicates high importance but the low performance and four attributes in the fourth quadrant or (QD), respectively. In the same vein, only two attributes were located on the third quadrant or (QC) known as 'the quadrant of low priority' of low importance and low performance. Figure 4.7 summarizes the total overview of the results and the location of the majority of attributes pertaining to RJW practice.

QA	5	36	QB
QC	2	4	QD

Figure 4.7. Summary of total attributes in each quadrant of IPA matrix

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE SECOND RESEARCH QUESTION

5.1 Introduction

In an attempt to explore reflective journal writing (RJW) among Pre-Registered Student Nurses (PRSN) in a Malaysian context, this chapter will present the analysis of data and the findings pertaining to the second research question. The participants contributed their perceptions on reflective journaling through questionnaire in the previous chapter; whereas for this research question, they have contributed their evaluations on the effectiveness of the reflective journaling in the process of developing professional knowledge and skills through interviews. Thus, this chapter mainly focuses to report, interpret, and elaborate on the key findings in the light of qualitative data collection and analysis for the second research question. Here, the second research question is revisited:

Research Question 2: *How do pre-registered student nurses evaluate the effectiveness of reflective journal writing in developing their professional knowledge and skills?*

The strategy to get the answer to this question was in-depth analysis of initially transcribed verbatim of the interviews consisting of substantiating the amount of data obtained through focused-group and one-on-one interviews and the researcher's field notes. The analysis helped the researcher to identify the main themes, which later the themes were broken down into subthemes guided by the literature of reflective practice. The procedures for data analysis were discussed in debt in Chapter Three. Accordingly, inductive and deductive analysis of transcribed

verbatim of the interviews together with the researcher's field notes was conducted to answer the second research question.

The findings from Focus Group Interview were labeled as (FGI) for the ease of reference. The interviewees' comments on their opinions and ideas were inquired and integrated with the analysis to observe the credibility of the analysis for the sake of establishing triangulation. In both types of interviews, the participants articulated their thoughts and views on the significant roles that reflective journal writing can play in the process of developing professional knowledge and skills. As for the report, the content analysis of the interview transcriptions revealed the following recurrent four major themes: 1) the role of RJW in the process of learning, 2) the process of self-awareness, 3) the role of RJW in emotional exploration, and 4) the role of the guideline in effective reflection. Some sub-themes were emerged within these major themes that were explained in details with related data.

5.2 Process of Learning through Reflective Journal Writing

Through the data analysis, it was revealed that reflective journal writing practice was perceived as an educational instrument in nursing education, and described it as an effective activity in the process of developing knowledge and skills for student nurses. In addition, within these key ideas articulated by PRSN, the following sub-themes were recognized: 1) knowledge improvement, 2) collaborative learning, and 3) effective reflection. These subthemes will be discussed in the following sections.

5.2.1 Knowledge Improvement

Considering RJW an educational activity, the majority of the participants have expressed their appreciation for the activity of journal writing. They acknowledged

that reflective journals would provide the opportunity to improve their knowledge in nursing skills while caring for patients as well as their ability in writing. When the question "what do you think of reflective journaling?" was asked, Nouri answered:

> "….when I write, I develop something. Then, I think why the person did like that. I am in the position to see what happened. RJW helps me to remember about past experience or any incident. Then I remember to write, I can question myself how I can improve my skills in the scene, from that incident. So, that I cannot do action first; I need to plan, from the incident maybe that incident is bad. So, my planning is I need to avoid this or that."
>
> (Nouri, 22-24, Jan 27, 2014)

Remember and improve nursing skills. At first, Nouri admitted she is good in writing in English, but having to write reflective journals wasn't a pleasant practice for her. She had this question in her mind why she should write reflective journals when she can simply learn by looking at others. Then, with her nurse tutor's encouragement she wrote her journal. Her realization projected in her statement that said reflection during reflective journaling on her previous experience in the clinical setting is helpful to make her realize what is right to do in a similar situation in the future. In fact, she was emphasizing on the matter that reflective journaling helps her to remember better of whatever nursing tasks she saw or actually involved during clinical posting. It is a reflective journaling that makes her remember and improve her skills. For the same question, another PRSN indicated that reflective journaling can make her be a better nurse. She explained that:

> "During reflective writing, there was time I could recall back from my past semesters, first or second semester. The things I had done not well, but I could improve myself when I needed to do it again. Reflective writing helped me to remember."
>
> (Lena, 32, Jan 27, 2014)

Lena believed that reflection during reflective journal writing improved her learning and her nursing practice by remembering the nursing task.

Constructive mistakes. Although PRSN was practicing under the close supervision of a certified staff nurse, making mistakes still was evitable; however, it could be considered as a part of the learning process and skill development. In the case of student nurses, making mistakes could be crucial since they are dealing with human life. In regard to this fact, some PRSN indicated that reflecting on their mistakes while writing their reflective journals helps them improve their nursing skills and this could be the purpose that motivated them to do the reflective journaling. In this regard, a participant pointed out her ideas as following.

> "Reflection teaches me how to learn from my mistakes. So, I can improve my knowledge. If our tutors give us, more explanation, and then we learn more from our mistakes." (Siti, 43-44, Jan 15, 2014)

As the nursing profession has no place for a mistake or wrongdoing, PRSN could get benefit from the reflection on their mistakes and learn from it for their future career. Likewise, one of the participants expressed her ideas as following:

> "As reflective writing is written about our past experience in the ward, while I am writing I realize about my wrong doing, and I think about it and I try to improve my knowledge in nursing care." (Ayasha, 30, Jan 27, 2014)

Ayesha stated that how her wrongdoing during clinical posting helped her in her learning. She admitted that when writing her reflective journals, she usually reflected on something she did wrong. So, she can correct it for the next time. As she put it, "it is the learning part of reflective journaling." When student nurses know about the quality of what they are doing, it implies that they know what is right and what is wrong in giving nursing care. It is aligned with Banner's idea (1984) that she declared that the students learn from their mistakes through self-development and engaged in self-reflection and self-evaluation by recognizing the sources of knowledge. Similarly, Lestander et al., (2016) highlighted the impact of committing

any mistakes that the student nurses began to realize what is needed to be done to avoid the same mistake in similar conditions in the future. Their important finding is that the student nurses realize that reflection on practice can contribute to workplace competence and patient safety (Lestander et al., 2016).

Likewise, one of the participants in FGI confessed that while writing journals, she realized that she had done something wrong during her clinical posting, and she knew she must have reported it; so, she would write it in her journal by admitting her wrongdoing upon what were correct procedures. According to her, the act of reporting to tutor what the right action was and what went wrong referred to the time that learning happened. A type of learning that lasts forever. As she said, through reporting our mistakes, our nurse tutors would control us more for not making the same mistake.

Quality of learning. When student nurses are in the stage of clinical practice, they have ample time and opportunity for quality of learning from their peers, the environment and the people who have a variety of different roles. Being aware of this opportunity, student nurses try to improve their knowledge and increase their quality of nursing skills. Having the quality of learning about nursing skills and giving care to patients is an advantage for any student nurses. So, they looked at reflective journaling as a tool to improve the quality of their practice and increase their learning.

> "Through RW, I've learned the quality of skills of nursing and even writing, a combination of these helps me to write a better journal."
>
> (Anna, 18, Jan 15, 2014)

In line with the above, Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) declared the value of reflective journaling as an effective way of gaining knowledge and causing

awareness of their tacit knowledge among learners. In the focus group interview (FGI), the quality of learning was also discussed. One of the participants stated:

"…for me, the quality of learning comes from a story that contained something I need to write; some stories that have impacts on me, as a student nurse. Actually, the stories [occurred in clinical practice] stay in our minds that can motivate us, that can improve our skills, our evaluation of some situation that can support or help us in learning. When we write, we say 'why the person did that, what did she do? So, we say "why"; that tells us, it reflects as we can do something that we need to follow in clinical posting."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

When they were asked to elaborate more on 'some situation' in focus group interview, one said:

"…during reflective journal writing, we have to reflect on, [mm] a kind of reflection that we come to see during hospital posting, [mmm] to the point of evaluating other's actions for our own learning."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

In the same view as the above, Shield (1995) maintained that either in isolation or in the company of others, a reflection on the situation can be a source of learning for an individual. It is possible that a learner forgets the situation but not the experience that acquired from that situation, and reflection upon the experience could enhance the durability of the experience and improve the learning. Boud et al (1985) stated that through reflection the mind of the learners anticipates learning from the experience.

In some instances, the participants mentioned about 'the story' in their reflective journals that is very impactful, because it stays in their mind and has a positive effect. Likewise, Coward (2011) has suggested to mentors that 'storytelling' can potentially encourage student nurses to share reflection. She believed that nurse mentors can use their experience in the reflection in a form of stories with some

sense of humor as a sample. This method can also establish a positive relationship between student nurses and the nurse tutors.

Student nurses expressed their ideas on their needs to learn about nursing care and nursing skills during clinical posting. And reflective journaling has assisted them to reflect on their levels of knowledge on what they know or don't know. In this regard, Lena said,

"......reflective journaling helps me to learn nursing skills in clinical posting,"

(Lena, 19, Jan 27, 2014)

In general, the majority of participants demonstrated common ideas about reflective journaling as an educational tool in the process of improving their professional knowledge in giving nursing care or in expressing their feelings and thoughts in writing particularly in English. From their statements, it can be concluded that reflective journaling can make them ready for lifelong learning.

In summary, the discussion above recaps the role of reflective journaling in improving learning according to the PRSN participating in the interviews. They stated that RJW increased their ability to remember better and improve their learning. They considered the mistakes are part of learning which they can avoid in their nursing practice and RJW helps them to learn from their mistakes and improve the quality of their learning for their future practice.

Moreover, in their talk during the interviews, oftentimes, the interviewees had mentioned how significant others helped them improve their knowledge. That is, the quality of learning would not be realized if there wasn't for other significant individuals, like staff nurses, or their peers; they admitted that this quality of learning was possible through collaborative learning.

5.2.2 Collaborative Learning

As a cognitive activity, reflection is considered a difficult task that requires attention from nurse tutor, mentors, or anybody who can assist the learners in having an effective reflection. In answering a question about how they dealt with difficulties of journaling in regard to their learning, almost all the interviewees stated that they need to discuss with someone who knows more about reflective journal writing as well as nursing if they wish to write acceptable reflective journals. Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) stated that receiving feedback from others particularly peers and friends, enhance effective reflection and stimulate more positive reflective writing. They believed that through exchanging different kinds of experience and interaction, the learners reach a higher state of development than without the interaction. Interviewees stated that writing journals would provide opportunities to socialize more with their friends and peers. So, collaboration was viewed as an appropriate reflective practice as it encourages communication among them as well.

Develop confidence. As working together creates a sense of unity, it was highlighted that working together with a peer increases PRSN's confidence due to their peers' support. One of the interviewees maintained that when she received support from other friends, she got more confident in writing reflective journal:

> "…..with help of my friend in RJ, I get confidence. I know RJ is for us to flashback on our previous job. And it helps me to improve my skills during giving nursing care. RJ is useful because it helps me to avoid wrongdoing, improve my skills and knowledge. I feel more confident when I am working with a peer." (Fatin, 52-54, Jan 17, 2014)

Being confident is professional behavior in the workplace. Oldland et al., (2017) found out in their study that students reported about their increased

confidence acquired through reflection and improved in their clinical knowledge and problem solving and communication skills in clinical environments.

Supporting atmosphere. In addition to cooperative peers, learning may occur when there was a supportive atmosphere among other members of health caregivers, such as staff nurses and doctors. As far as reflection concerns, and when the members of health care providers work cooperatively and in a team in clinical settings, novice student nurses can enjoy the interaction among them and learn better. As Ayesha stated:

> "I just enjoy looking at what staff nurses and doctors did to save patients' life. I always look back at what they did to save her life, then I think about "how" they did it."   (Ayesha, 27-28, Jan 27, 2014)

In line with the above quote, Oldland et al. (2017) asked learners to write about their perception of team-based learning. Learners stated team-based learning helps them to develop better communication styles, shape their learning styles, enhance listening skills, develop their teamwork skills, and increase confidence that, in turn, led to the development of clinical and professional characteristics of high-quality nursing practice. Likewise, another interviewee pointed out about the reflecting on other's interventions. She pointed out that this observation and reflecting on it helped her learn. Safura stated:

> "RJ is like reflecting on a nursing intervention that you have done. I can always think about some knowledge that I learned from a staff nurse. [Types of medication, intervention, etc.]. What others did in a given incident, so I do the same or differently."   (Safura, 20-23, Jan 21, 2014)

The above participant explicitly admitted how RJ can help her internalize the learning received thorough working or observing another nurse. This type of reflection upon the workplace is helpful for the student nurses' future practice.

A priori discussion. The interviewees admitted that in the process of reflective journal writing, they sought help from their friends. They would discuss the situations they wanted to write about, asked each other for proper words, and talked about their opinions on their writing afterward. Chong (2009) stated that student nurses get familiar with reflection and reflective writing through discussion with their classmates. This collaboration among them was common for the sake of producing proper and acceptable reflective journals since it was stated as a difficult task. Siti stated that if she didn't know how to describe a situation in her writing she would talk with her friends; discussed the situation to help her remember. Then she could write. One of the interviewees, similarly, stated:

> "I usually learn more when I discussed the situation with my friend about what I wanted to write and about what I had done as my nursing care. That way, I learned more when I wrote reflective journals with the help of my other friends." (Lena, 34, Jan 27, 2014)

In her statement, she explained how she tackled the difficulties of reflective journaling by having a discussion with her friends.

Writing skills. Collaboration can help these student nurses learn other aspects of reflective journaling as well. Jasper (1999) declared that reflective writing skills are another area of development that is facilitated by the reflective journaling. If the student nurses felt a need for their writing skills, the lack of knowledge on the mechanical parts of writing, and the choice of words to express their emotions in RJW, their friends were the one they would go to first. One interviewee said:

> "…. if she needs any help for her English language to write her journals, she would go to her friends as well or she would consult a dictionary for suitable words to write. Then, I ask my friends to proof read my writing.
>
> (Fatin, 18-21, Jan 17, 2014)

Likewise, Yun, who admitted her English is poor, said writing is a difficult activity for her; so, she also sought help from her friends. She admitted:

"I always ask my friends who are more experienced in English to help me write my journals."   (Yun, 19-20, Jan15, 2014)

It is clear that writing is a hard activity for an academically poor student, and writing reflective journals is harder; especially, when she must express her thoughts and emotions about the nursing practice. In this regard, her ability to write journals is facilitated through collaboration with her classmates and friends.

Tutors' roles. In the process of reflection and reflective journaling, nurse tutors can play a significant role to help their student nurses. Student nurses always seek help from a more knowledgeable one, and their tutors were the most suitable ones in this sense. Shazaitul and Maisarah (2015) emphasized that nurse tutors should provide a high quality of assignments to promote students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, in the interviews, not all of the participants demonstrated their constructive opinions regarding their tutors' collaboration in the process of reflective journaling. Following excerpt is from one of the interviewees' statement:

"I seldom go to my tutor if I have any problem with my reflective journaling. I usually go to my friends or my roommate who knows English well if I have a problem with my RJ.   When I think about how staff nurses and doctors have saved patient's life, I realize that it is done with the cooperation they have toward giving patients' care."   (Ayesha, 36-39, Jan 27, 2014)

Other interviewees admitted that reflective journaling could be done with less difficulty and less stress if they did it with the help of their classmates. That is, collaborative learning through peer involvement in journaling was the most

preferable learning strategy. They believed that through the collaboration and during the process of journaling, they had learned nursing skills better as well.

As Lena stated that "I usually don't go to my tutor if I have any problem in journaling." Another participant pointed out:

"If I don't know something I don't go to my tutor because she doesn't have time. So, I avoid something I don't know, I don't write it in my writing. So, as far as my job done, it is ok, la!" (Fatin, 48-50, Jan 17, 2014)

Reflective journals could be used as an educational tool for the student nurses to demonstrate their level of knowledge in nursing skills and RJW could be a clinical report of what they had done during their clinical posting while tutors were not present. Thus, some other interviewees admitted that they wanted to write their journal in order to show to their tutors how they had done their nursing tasks and how well they had learned their lessons. Similarly, Lena stated:

"…what I usually, write in my journal is whatever happened in the hospital ward when my tutor was not around. I just wanted to tell her how I faced the incident, how well, I did my nursing care and how I solved the problem alone." (Lena, 32, Jan 27, 2014)

In support of this view, Oldland et al., (2017) found out in their study that students reported about their increased confidence acquired through reflection and improved in their clinical knowledge and problem solving and communication skills in clinical environments. As far as learning concerns, Safura pointed out:

"In case of chest pain, we know from theory that we need to apply oxygen or increase the flow. Tutors know us, as student nurses, how much knowledge we gained during theory time, how much we can apply in clinical. Reflective writing can help us to show our knowledge while we were practicing our nursing tasks." (Safura, 15-18, Jan 21, 2014)

Moreover, interviewees in the focus group interview answered to the question of how they felt about their tutors' role concerning reflective journaling, their reactions were not very promising. One of the interviewees made a statement and the other participants showed their agreement as below:

"…as for me, it is a matter of trust toward my tutor. I write very carefully. But as for many others, it is a matter of an assignment and a duty, since we need to write RJ for the marks. Sometimes, we don't realize that RJ is for our future, they are for a better 'you'."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

The role of tutors in the process of collaborative learning could simply be described of little importance. The reason was that the student nurses became selective of what to say and what to write in their RJ. In fact, as Chirema (2007) stated, they wrote in their RJ what their tutors would like to see. That is, reflective journaling was an activity that student nurses could communicate with their tutors about their learning and knowledge they had gained and put into actual practice during their clinical posting. Chirema (2007) stated the reasons for the learners' inability to reflect are the lack of trust and support from the teacher necessary for learning to occur. The following excerpt was from one of the participants who mentioned about this point:

"My tutor just expects me to do reflective journaling as my homework, just do it and pass exam, just get credit. I think, in the future, our tutors should be more understanding   for our reflective journals and encourage us [as student nurses] to be more honest and responsible in our reflective journal writing."

(Anna, 47-49, Jan 15, 2014)

Varagona and Hold (2019) considered that nurse tutors require guidance regarding their choice of words and behavior to gain students' trust and avoid losing their trust. The tutors need to examine their personal trait, words, and behaviors in order to establish a caring student-tutor relationship built on trust. In general, As Siti

frankly said: "We need more explanation from our tutors to be able to learn from our mistakes," the role of nurse tutors in reflective journaling was very insignificant according to the pre-registered student nurses in the context of this study. In a study conducted by Braine in 2009, she pointed out that lack of self-efficacy in teachers in facilitating reflection has caused problems for the learners. So, she recommended the nurse tutors to use strategies to help their novice student nurses in this highly complex and cognitively demanding of reflection activity.

In summary to the above discussion, it can be said that collaborative learning is a type of learning experienced by novice student nurses. Through collaboration with others, they experience the confidence of being surrounded by supporting individuals who can help them in writing their journals by providing their knowledge in writing skills or allocating time for discussion prior to their RJW. Collaborative learning is welcomed by student nurses to produce before well-organized and acceptable writing.

5.2.3 Effective Reflection

Reflection, as it literally implies, is a flashback on the activities the learners have done previously. Through this cognitive ability, the learners are able to remember effectively and even write their reflective journals successfully. In this regard, participants stated their ideas about how reflective journaling helps them with an effective reflection that helps them to remember better.

> "For me, RJ is my flashback on evidence. I think I can put myself in other's shoes. It is a flashback. Like reading a novel, understand the characters, understand what happened and learn from the mistake."

<div align="right">(Siti, 12-15, Jan 15, 2014)</div>

In the process of learning, one of the factors that help the learners achieve the desired level of learning is effective reflection. As the above participant pointed out, learning from mistakes through reflection helped her learn more.

Life-long learning. The nursing profession highly relies on the knowledge of nurses as they are dealing with patient's life. Considering life-long learning, reflection and reflective practices are the means to achieve this goal. One of the interviewees mentioned:

> "RW is about the experience, our flashback. What we have done has an impact on our life now. It makes me think "why" I did what I did."
>
> (Fatin, 18-20, Jan 17, 2014)

The impact of effective reflection was discussed in the focus group interview. The participants believed:

> "…reflective journal is difficult, right? But it helps me in reflection, and I usually reflect back on when I did something bad or wrong, or when someone else did that, which had a bad result. So, I know I should do something with a positive result."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

The role of reflective journaling was indicated by the above statement that the elements of learning from mistakes and reflecting positively on it and writing in reflective journaling were all matters in a better learning. To support the above quotes, Mezirow (2000) stated that, effective reflection relates to a thought process that establishes a baseline of understanding of the different concepts, values, and beliefs initiated inter-personally or intra-personally that play a significant role in the process of learning. Accordingly, lifelong learning is a dimension of adult learning through reflection; the ability of self-reflection in the direction of self-construction (Wilson & Hayes, 2000).

It can be concluded that regardless of its difficulty and time consuming, reflective journaling gives the purpose to lifelong learning; a type of learning that is required for effective nursing care. RJW is a tool to help the novice student nurses to reach higher level of learning and professionalism.

Self-r*eporting*. The concept of reporting, in this context, refers to the role that RJW plays for the student nurses. As they were not in direct contacts with their tutors during their clinical posting, so, they use their RJ to tell their tutors about the real-life events they were involved during clinical posting. An interviewee pointed out that RJ is beneficial in learning and telling nurse tutors about what she has done during clinical posting, and with the support from her tutor, she has learned not to make the same mistake and has learned better. In line with the above, Tarrant (2013, p.67) asserted that reflection could develop a range of skills in a person namely, "being comfortable with other person, being able to describe their practice   reflectively and thoughtfully, being able to articulate their thoughts, and being able to trust another person."

> "Reflection is a flashback on evidence. So, when I think back on my events and my memory and write it down it becomes my RJW. To tell my tutor, or any time anybody asks me anything about the time I was in clinical posting I have something to tell them. To emphasis on reflective activity, tutors ask us to reflect back to know how important it is. They are supportive when we a make mistake and we don't repeat it because we think about it and reflect back on it."

(Siti, 20-29, Jan 15, 2014)

Similarly, another interviewee stated about the role of RJW and her tutor in the following statement:

> "After writing RJW, my tutor tells me that I must think, and then write about both sides of my action. I should not write only about the negative side. I should write about the positive side too."   (Yun, 25-26, Jan 15, 2014)

However, some interviewees did not support the above participants. On the contrary, they demonstrated their ideas about the role of their tutors differently.

Self-consciousness. It was strongly advocated by the interviewees that communication with their tutor could be done through RJW. However, the interviewees talked about some incidences that hindered the effective reflection and honest reflective journaling. Mezirow (1997) declared that journal writing among many methods to stimulate transformational learning. He believes RJW could stimulate critical consciousness and critical reflection that are integral parts of the transformative process. He strongly emphasized that transformational learning could be realized when the experiences were discussed and explored. For instance, Siti stated that 'we are told to write the truth in RJW, about whatever happened, and whatever we did. Likewise, another interviewee, Anna, pointed out that:

> "I think if my tutor encourages us to be more responsible, to be more honest in RJW and nursing care, it is better."   (Anna, 30, Jan 15, 2014)

Through reflection on their tutors' reactions towards their writings, some novice student nurses decided to act differently. As they become conscious about what to write in RJW and how to write it, write in a way that tutors 'like to hear', had stolen the true sense of reflective journal writing. In the focus group interview, a similar opinion was stated:

> "…as my friend said, how I could be a reflector when we write something mostly that our lecturer wants from us. We write about something that is wrong and they say it's your fault. Then we don't write an honest reflective journal to help us to be a reflector."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

This awareness of avoiding the truth in their reflective journals was mainly to prevent being scolded by their nurse tutors and at the end lose their face. In the same vein, in focus group interview, their beliefs in telling the truth were articulated as:

> "…I think our lecturers need to encourage us to be more honest, and they need to respond more sensitively to our RJW. Our lecturers must help us to be more open-minded."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

These PRSN stated that they write their RJW in a way to be acceptable to their tutors. In other words, they wrote whatever tutors like to hear to avoid being verbally scolded by them. They actually reflect on their tutors' reactions to being favorable for them to the past exam.

To summarize, this section discussed the participants' positive views on the role of RJW in the process of learning. They revealed through interviews that RJW can improve their knowledge useful in clinical posting at the level that they can be more competent in their nursing practice. They elaborated on the collaboration of others in their journey of writing journals. They asserted on the role of others that facilitated the reflection as well as the writing journals helped them to perform better in the clinical posting. They mentioned the role of RJW in the process of self-directed learning through effective reflection. The summary of the above discussion is depicted in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Summary of Themes for Process of Learning through RJW

Themes	Sub-themes
A) Knowledge Improvement	a) Remember & Improve Skills b) Constructive Mistakes c) Quality of Learning
B) Collaborative Learning	a) Develop Confidence b) Supporting Atmosphere c) A priori Discussion d) Writing Skills e) Tutor's Role
C) Effective Reflection	a) Life-long Learning b) Self-reporting c) Self-consciousness

5.3 Self-Awareness through Reflective Journal Writing

The activity of reflective journal writing has been considered as a domain to improve one's educational endeavor through improving awareness (Bandura, 1986; Rassaei, 2015; McAllister, 2012; Abednia et al., 2013). Bandura (1986) maintained the pathway that leads the individuals toward the development of self-awareness and self-regulation lies in active learning from experience (Boud et al., 1985). Epstein (1999) asserted that the development of the individuals' professional identity integrated with the individuals' beliefs, attitudes and values, and the professional culture; and an ability to lead and link new knowledge to the prior knowledge (Schon, 1985). With this brief introduction, this section discusses the role of reflective journaling in the process of self-awareness. Through the data analysis,

participants have articulated their point of views on the effect of reflective journaling and their sense of awareness. That is, practicing RJW can provide opportunities for the learners to be aware of their weak and strong points to make plans for their educational achievement. PRSN believed that reflective journaling is an activity that is beneficial in the process of nursing education. Their ideas about the impact of reflective journaling and their awareness were presented in the following sub-themes: 1) learning need, 2) competence development, 3) levels of criticality, and 4) forming professional self-identity.

5.3.1 Learning Needs

Nursing field.   One of the common ideas among the pre-registered student nurses was the role of reflective journaling in regard to self-awareness.   The interviewees highlighted that they need to be knowledgeable in the field of nursing; in which reflective journal practices could provide the best opportunity to understand the areas of their learning needs. Schon (1984) maintained that RJW provides an opportunity for an effective reflection and has long-lasting learning as the by-product. Thus, the students are required having knowledge of multiple literacies, being able to explore the areas of their learning needs and requirements, and the ability to integrate the prior knowledge and recent experience from the clinical setting. Similarly, Chapman et al., (2009) asserted that RJW could be the means of workplace practical knowledge, facilitating professional development, problem-solving and lifelong learning (Plack et al. 2007; Chirema, 2007; Mezirow, 2000; Kear, 2013; Rassaei, 2015).

Anna admitted that during writing her reflective journal, she realized what 'things' [types of nursing tasks] she can do and what things she can't do. Likewise,

another interviewee stated that having good nursing knowledge requires practice and attention; and reflective journaling can provide this opportunity for her.

> "Reflective journaling is important, it tells me what I should do if the incident happening again.RW tells me about the action towards the client. We need to reflect back, what you have done towards the client. What steps we took when asked for help. You think, should I help or ask staff nurse."
>
> (Safura, 9-11, Jan 21, 2014)

Having knowledge of nursing skills can be supported by reflective journaling. Participants demonstrated positive attitudes toward reflective journaling. They believe that RJ can help them in the process of doing nursing care. They can realize about their mistakes and avoid their wrongdoing in the future.

> "When I think back on my events and my memory of that events, jot down…then I realize about my ability. RW can help us in the process of doing nursing care." (Siti, 8-10, Jan 15, 2014)

The interviewees admitted that during journal writing about a life event that they were involved, and they have done their best and provided their best nursing care, they feel proud of themselves. This positive feeling can help in internalization of their learning. In support of this view, Mezirow (1997) asserted that student nurses should be able to identify the learning needs of the workplace and to recognize the significance of self-directed learning. In this regard, Safura stated:

> "What makes me proud is that I have done something for my client, if I didn't do something, I can learn, and will do it in the future."
>
> (Safura, 34-35, Jan 21, 2014)

As reflective journaling is a practice of reflecting on the previous experience, PRSN stated in their RJ that they can look back at the learning situation provided for them by other more knowledgeable individuals acting to save patient's life; staff nurses and doctors in the clinical posting. It seems that observing the real-life event

of the medical condition (for example, CPR) had an impact on their minds as student nurses. Then, while they are writing RJ they could remember the nursing procedures and the nursing tasks of how to manage the patients independently. This ability of remembering can assist PRSN in the process of lifelong learning. Ayesha pointed out one of her experience while writing RJ:

> "When I wrote about the CPR I had experienced. I could remember what the doctor and staff nurse did for the patient."
>
> (Ayesha, 15-19, Jan 27, 2014)

In the process of learning, student nurses in clinical posting have ample of time to observe other more knowledgeable ones during medical interventions, to practice giving nursing care, and to be aware of the level of their knowledge as a student (Rassaei, 2015). In line with the above, Bjerkvik and Hilli (2019) asserted that the novice student nurses are well familiar with the medical situations involving them in learning, which all depends on their ability of meaning-making from the clinical experience expected to be reflected in their reflective journal writing. Likewise, one of the interviewees stated:

> "…during practicum, we just pay attention to nursing care. And in writing, we use our minds to write. We are sometimes very busy to think about RJ during our work. When we write a journal, it helps us *to remember* and to get nursing knowledge."   (Yun, 23-25, Jan 15, 2014)

When it comes to write reflective journals, they reflect on these experiences and practices and write about a positive points and negative points of the incident. This way, they can see themselves as a better person or a better nurse in the future when a similar situation occurs. In this regard, one of the interviewees admitted that:

> "…..during RW, I realize more about what I have done. I tell myself, it is me who did this and that. Then, from this point, I become a better person (better

nurse). With RW I know myself better. That is, I won't make the same mistake during caring for my patients. So, I become a better nurse through RJ."

<div align="right">(Anna, 37-40, Jan15, 2014)</div>

Likewise, the notion of becoming a better person has been a concern as well, similarly, they say in focus group interview: "it (RJ) makes me think to be a better student in the future." Another interviewee stated her awareness of her educational needs as below:

> I realize my knowledge about the disease is not enough. I need a good knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and the ability to express my feelings that help me to write a journal. During writing, I realize about the area which requires more attention in nursing care. I realize about what I need to do to improve my nursing skills and areas I need to practice more in clinical area.

<div align="right">(Nouri, 38-1, Jan 27, 2014)</div>

This interviewee underlined the outcome of the reflective journal in her nursing practice. She maintained that through writing journals she realized her lack of knowledge in the field of nursing as well as English language (Rassaei, 2015).

English language. One of the domains that interviewees elaborated on was the role of reflective journaling in improving their English language learning (Rassaei, 2015). In fact, one of the participants pointed out that knowing the English language can be helpful in writing RJ. The interviewee expressed their thoughts as reflective journaling has positive effects on improving their English language; as Nouri stated above that through reflective journaling she could improve her English language in expressing her feelings and she had got the ability to describe the events in clinical posting. Accordingly, Mahlanze and Sibiya (2017) maintained that student nurses' RJW and their language abilities in expressing their feelings should be taken into consideration. They believed that nurse tutors must take serious actions to nurture this ability. In their talk during interviews, the participants asserted that while they

are writing their reflective journals they become aware of some areas they need to learn. Siti expressed her thoughts:

"…for quality of reflective writing, we need proper grammar, proper words, and proper description of events. Beside that the knowledge of nursing skills that is part of our lives. So, through RW I can improve this knowledge and learn to express my feeling and describe the event.as well."

<div align="right">(Siti, 38-40, Jan1, 2014)</div>

Grammar. One of the components of English language that concerned the interviewees was that their grammar knowledge is insufficient in expressing their ideas in reflective writing. And they need to improve their knowledge regarding English language grammar. They believed if they knew grammar more, they could express their ideas and feelings more efficiently.

"… in writing RJ, I need to know grammar, and ability to express and elaborate my ideas. So, I know I need to improve my language knowledge."

<div align="right">(Yun14-16, Jan 2014)</div>

Vocabulary. Another area of concern regarding English language was their knowledge of vocabulary and terminology they need to know to write better reflective journals. In the same vein, Ayesha stated that through the reflective journal, she realizes that she needs to know some grammar, and more words to express her feeling and ideas. Similarly, the awareness in areas of language needs was maintained by the following interviewee as:

"I know I need more knowledge in the English language, in writing, in expressing my feelings. But RJ helps me to improve my weaknesses."

<div align="right">(Fatin, 30-32, Jan17, 2014)</div>

Being aware of their needs to improve in learning areas, nursing or English language, is the positive impact of reflective journal practice. Likewise, Rassaei (2015, p. 128) asserted that "reflective writing can act as a mediational means which

assists higher mental functions such as memory, attention, and development."It can be argued that without practicing RJ there would be less awareness toward professional improvement among these pre-registered student nurses.

5.3.2 Development of Competence

The concept of awareness in relationship with reflective journal practices has addressed here to examine the participants' levels of improvement towards developing competence. It is a common belief among student nurses to reach the point to be able to work independently in the future; which requires them to be competent enough in their nursing practice. In support of reflection for competence development in the context of vocational education and training, Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) pointed out that reflection has a strong connection between the practical element and the theoretical one in workplaces. In their responses to the question of evaluating reflective journal practices and their learning, PRSN juxtaposed RJ practices with the increase in competency in various levels of nursing. For instance, during the focus group interview, the participants stated on their awareness and RJ in the following words:

> "…RJ gives awareness and understanding of the feelings within me about my patients, health care workers, and their actions, something about why they did what they did."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

The participants highlighted in their talks about certain elements to care about in the process of competency as the result of effective reflection. The most common one was the danger of following the same routine nursing tasks without reflecting-on or reflecting-in the nursing action. Taking actions out of habitualisation and automation always have been a concern in nursing education. The primary impact of

habitual act is the risk of dehumanizing patients and their needs (Chirema, 2007; McAllister, 2012). In regards to competency, effective reflection helps the nurses carefully plan their actions and consciously control them to ensure they are beneficial to their patients.

Avoiding automation. One of the shortfalls that are hazardous for nurses in their practice is looking at nursing care as something routine. In this case, the purposes of certain nursing tasks are not prioritized, and creativity is not present. Therefore, reflection on and in the action prior to RJW can make learners be more alert in their caregiving. They believed that the impact of previous practice can be beneficial in avoiding automation.

> "Not to do anything as routine. What makes me proud is that I have done something for my client, if I didn't do something, I can learn, and will do it in the future." (Safura, 21-23, Jan 21, 2014)

The above participant believed that doing nursing care as a routine is the danger which distracts professional nursing care. This element would be avoided through RJ. Mezirow (1997) asserted that taking appropriate action is part of the process of reflection; so, the value of effective reflection can be realized when the learners are able to take action competently and make decisions.

> "If I hadn't done something with deep knowledge previously because of lack of time, we just do nursing care as we were told and according to procedure."
>
> (Fatin, 27-29, Jan 17, 2014)

Reflection on the previous practice could assist PRSN in deep learning and avoid automation of daily routine of nursing care. Participants pointed out that RJ is the reflection in a written form that helps in learning.

Reflection on and in action. The concepts of 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action' were coined by Schon (1984). He associated the former with critical practice as a process that 'thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it' that is a conscious action-based practice, yet not expressed explicitly. Whereas the latter refers to the process of meaning-making usually an action after the event has occurred. Reflective journals are usually written after clinical posting. The student nurses choose one incident of real-life events to write about in their journal. Their writing, in a form of journals, is the true example of reflection on their experience, their reflection upon their prior knowledge and about "whats" and "whys" that was ignited their reflection and activated their mind during nursing practice as well as during journaling. For instance, one of the participants stated that:

"In my RJ, I usually write about an unforgettable incident. In RJ, based on the stages, I think what I can do better if a similar situation happens."

(Lena, 17-18, Jan 27, 2014)

The concept of reflection-on and reflection-in during clinical posting that caused the student nurses to ask big questions of 'what' and 'why' was also admitted by the participants in the focus group as follow:

"…think about different actions taken by the staff nurses, in that particular situation. Why they did that? What they did, and what happened after that."

(FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

In the process of developing competence, one of the interviewees, Nouri, pointed out was that, "when I write, I develop something. Then I think why the person did that… I am in a position to see what happened." She admitted that through reflection and reflective writing, she developed awareness on her level of

knowledge at that point in time. However, this incident could be a source of knowledge for her future career. Likewise, another interviewee stated:

"Thinking about that incident (CPR), I know what to do in the future, even better. With this knowledge, I think I will do whatever I can do."

(Ayesha, 21-22, Jan27, 2014)

With this attitude, this novice student nurse could reflect on any incidents during clinical posting and use them for their learning to be a competent person in that nursing task. In short, Bandura (1986) supported this condition and maintained that as the result of self-reflection on identifying positive as well as negative aspects of nursing tasks, learners appropriately adjust their thoughts and behaviors. At this level, this altered behavior is viewed as improving professional competence through reflection.

5.3.3 Levels of Criticality

The concept of criticality has been the ultimate ability of effective reflection. How this ability can assist the participants in their educational life was stressed in the interviews. Particularly, PRSN expressed their opinion on what they gained through reflective journaling. It was expressed that they improved their knowledge by revising what they learned in theory. Moreover, under the improved self-awareness, PRSN revealed the improvement on their critical ability. Thus, it was revealed that reflective journaling had another function as to be critical to their tacit knowledge on nursing practice and the new knowledge received as the result of exposure in the clinical posting. RJW provides an opportunity to reflect on their nursing practices and develop them by being critical. For instance, one interviewee explained that after the clinical posting, she felt more aware of staff nurses' nursing practice, and her misbehavior, and she said that she would be prepared if the same incident occurs.

"In my journal, I reflect back on my intervention toward the client to see what I did for him and what the staff nurse did for him and how. RJ helps me remember some earlier stages about nursing intervention towards the client."

(Safura, 47-50, Jan 21, 2014)

In support of the above statement, Conte (2015) stated that students would reveal elements of critical reflection if they can link past, present, and future knowledge as well as integrate emotional, thoughtful, and cognitive experience, and plan for future learning. These are parts of reflection practices that can help students to reframe problems and solve problem accordingly.

Evaluation and decision making. In the process of journaling, the PRSN also pointed out that they gained the ability to demonstrate their more knowledgeable being when they could make decisions and make meaning of their actions. This level of reflection refers to the way PRSN were able to reflect effectively on and in real-life situations and events more academically. Likewise, Paterson and Chapman (2013) highlighted that the nature of knowledge acquisition from experience is required to develop skills of critical reflection to advance in higher levels of understanding and awareness. They concluded that the ability to reflect upon and evaluate one's experience leads to deep learning that believed to have longer sustainability. One participant stated reflecting on the intervention and writing in RJ could help me learn. The participants commonly stated about the opportunities to evaluate their actions and reflect on it; they explained about the time that they made certain decisions or other's decision making was very important and educational for them. In the focus group interview the statement of one of the interviewees was worth mentioning:

"…I enjoy the evaluation part of RJ, when I can criticize about the situation in the ward; I wish I could do something about the condition. I like to write in a

about the event that makes my writing more interesting. In my evaluation, I would see what part is good or bad, and whether it needs to be changed, or something to be done in saving a patient's life."

Some other participants demonstrated their deep reflection on their experience in the clinical posting that assisted them to make decisions in a future situation and how RJ helps them to internalize the impact of that experience. Having the ability of effective reflection and writing RJ has made PRSN is more critical and cautious about their giving nursing care. They have become fully aware of their position that making mistakes has no place in their profession. So, they decided to be more critical and learn from every opportunity they have in practicum. In this regard, Abednia et al., (2013) asserted that the teachers considered RJW has great potential to help them improve their self-awareness and reasoning that is enhancing critical thinking. In the focus group interview, this idea was discussed.

"The first lesson from a bad experience or a bad incident (in the hospital ward) is that that we need to take precautions for not to happen again, never occur again. In the case of a good incident, we can think, it can tell us to follow the example, the experience. During writing RJ, we always think about what we should write, that contains something…something that has or had impacts on us as student nurses. Being critical means giving commentary about what should be done in certain events. RJ helps us to learn in a way to not make the same mistakes for the rest of our lives. So far, I have learned many types of knowledge and trainings that stay in my mind forever. And it is because of RJ practice because I look at the situation in a critical manner. RJ gives us a sense of evaluating ourselves along with others as well, in a more critical manner. Because we are dealing with human beings, and not machines or robots, we must be careful not to make any mistake. If that happens, we have to deal with the scolding from the staff nurse and other more experienced ones in the ward. So, no one wants that happen." (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

It was predominantly expressed by the interviewees that reflective journal practice motivates them to evaluate the real-life condition to be critical to learn from

the positive situations to be able to make sound decisions that demonstrates their level of competency. On the other hand, they admitted that RJ inspires them to gain knowledge from the unfortunate situations that prevent them from making mistakes.

Critical thinking. In the process of lifelong learning, critical thinking is an integral part of effective reflection. According to Braine (2009), nurses hope to be reflective practitioners; so, they engage in reflective practices to reach the level of competency which is considered to have many attributes of reflective practices such as problem-solving skills and critical thinking. Knowing what reflection is, in this regard, one of the interviewees stated that:

> "Applying theory to practice while doing the nursing tasks; you reflect something automatically, and then write about it. It feels like various skills. You are not thinking about skills anymore, you think about whatever you have done and write. In clinical posting, we need to use our critical thinking. You think about the most suitable step, action, or procedure about why we are doing it." (Safura, 27-30, Jan 21, 2014)

She knows very well that reflection is applying theory to practice. She pointed out how her tacit knowledge can be helpful in reflective journal writing and lifelong learning. Similarly, another interviewee pointed out that reflective journaling improves her criticality upon her nursing practice that can develop her knowledge for being a "better nurse in the future." Fatin stated as:

> "I become critical to my practice, why I didn't do what I should do. How I can be a good student nurse and a better nurse in the future. Reflective journaling gives me time to think. I think reflective journal writing is not about how to use sterile procedure; it is more about "why" I should use it. In RJW, I remember what I didn't do before. It helps me to reflect." (Fatin, 51-53, Jan 17, 2014)

In line with the above quote, Schon (1987) maintained that the significant impact of critical reflection is in the development of professional and

clinical knowledge. The ability to employ critical-thinking skills enhances student nurses to be more creative and resourceful which can assist them to achieve lifelong learning. Likewise, the other participant believed that reflective journaling is as important as other subjects in her study; as it was helpful in her learning.

> "Reflective journal writing is critical. 1st we do something, and then we write about it. I think reflective journal writing is as important as biology. The most important thing is what we can learn from RJW. When we start to write something, 1st we think about all the events, then from all of them, we choose one that is most critical. So, the most important thing is learning. We can learn something from that. I think it is the quality of RJW."

> (Anna, 18-22, Jan 15, 2014)

In this regard, Mezirow (1997) affirmed that journal writing, group projects, role play, are among methods to stimulate transformational learning through reflection. As the above quotation implies, he strongly emphasized that transformational learning could be realized when the experiences were discussed and explored. In other words, RJW could stimulate critical consciousness and critical thinking that are integral parts of the transformative process.

5.3.4 Forming Professional Self-Identity

Student nurses are well aware that they must know everything about nursing skills and learn everything about nursing care well to be able to practice in the clinical setting as staff nurses. During the clinical practice, the student nurses are in constant interventions with other members of the health group, peers and clinical teachers. Parks (2000) asserted that through the process of writing, the student nurses would adapt what fits better in the particular hospital setting and similarly acquire the disciplinary knowledge required from them. And as the process of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) indicates, the novice student nurses

could have gradually reduced their reliance on the more experienced others and could form their identity through socializing with other members of the professional community. This sense of belonging to the community of nurses is very strong that they reiterated clearly in their interviews. For instance:

> "When I become a staff nurse, I refer to some problem, I can reflect, remember what the staff nurse did in that similar situation. At least, I can improve myself. I keep learning of what to do as a future nurse."
>
> (Safura, 37-39, Jan21, 2014)

Student nurses well aware of their roles in the future. So, for the time being they considered each problem as an opportunity for learning and for their future role as staff nurses. Through reflection upon their practice and others', the sense of self-development prepares PRSN for better and more knowledgeable nurses in the future.

The roles of individuals. The interviewees were fairly confident that individuals in the clinical area can be role models for them; at present time they can learn from them and to be a source of inspiration for their future carrier. In other words, it requires being aware and evaluates critically the socio-cultural surroundings of the contexts of learning (Rolfe, 2002; Boud and Walker 1998). The participants highlighted that when they are in the hospital ward, every person can teach them the nursing knowledge and skills they need, and they can learn from them how to be good and responsible nurses in the future.

> "…when I reflect back on what has happened [patient with heart problems and chest pain], I become panicky because I didn't know what to do at first. But I knew from past experiences that I should act as fast as possible. When the doctor told me to calm down…., I saw that the doctor wasn't doing it fast. I thought about why the doctor wasn't acting fast, especially when the patient's life could be lost. But for me, when I become a staff nurse, I can work with the doctors in a more efficient way. And as for the patient, I can give the more necessary nursing case, as we have studied in our theory lessons. As for me, this incident has become an experience that I can reflect back on, and I can improve my nursing care abilities in the future."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

In the process of learning, student nurses are aware that the staff nurses are their superior and they must learn nursing skills from them and practice nursing care under their supervision. Moreover, these significant others in the working place projecting their future to student nurses. In fact, the individual's surroundings can trigger effective positive learning through reflection, not by the individual, but through the individuals present in the same surroundings. That is, in the clinical setting, health care workers know how to reflect as part of their ability of reasoning (Clouder, 2000). In line with Clouder, some participants pointed out about the staff nurses' behaviors and critically talked about them. They maintained that for the time being staff nurses' knowledge is their concern, not their behavior. Fatin stated her idea as:

> "When I see those staff nurses who don't care much, my friend and I are afraid to be staff nurse in the future. To be a good nurse in the future, we know what we should do and learn from them."   (Fatin, 37-39, Jan17, 2014)

Hence, if a problem arises, the process of reflection through sharing thoughts with others from the same knowledge background could be articulated and learning from each other could be largely internalized. Likewise, one of the interviewees admitted that when she is writing her journal, she thinks back to what she had done, and what others did to help the patient:

> "When I think back about the CPR, and my responsibility to check the flow and blood sugar, I know as a nurse what to do in the future."
>
>   (Ayesha, 41-41, Jan 27, 2014)

It can be argued that some individuals are not only the source of knowledge but also, they can be a source of inspiration to help PRSN to develop their professional identity in a more positive manner. As maintained by the interviewees, while writing their reflective journals, and while they reflect on what happened during that clinical

posting and who did what and how they did the job, student nurses can form their identity as future staff nurses. The same interviewee stated her opinion as such:

"If I have a problem, I don't go to staff nurses and tell her about how good or bad she did her job. I just try to learn from her. Because they are senior to us, so we don't tell them about their wrongdoing. We just try to learn from it."

(Ayesha, 45-47, Jan27, 2014)

Clouder (2000) believes that even novice clinical practitioners could modify these silent reflections obtained through experiences into a learning opportunity. Writing is not much practiced among the nurses and this activity is limited to writing the nursing report. The opportunity to express their emotions is a very rare occasion if RJ receives less attention. In this part, participants reiterated the emotional states that they experience while they were involved in the process of writing RJ. Their ideas about the role of RJW and their emotional exploration were presented in the following section. From this vantage point, learning that stems out of the individual's experience and reality of the individual's world can be influential in shaping and reshaping the person's life to the extreme that can be emancipatory-freeing the learners from the teacher (Freire, 1970).

Plan for the future. The process of RJW is more than just reflecting on the previous action or reflecting on someone else's action in the hospital setting. Tarrant (2013) asserted that the learners need to turn these reflections into action; some actions, simple or complicated, can be planning for personal development. It was reiterated by PRSN that RJW helps them to get the use of the knowledge gained in their nursing fields when they face a similar situation later in their practice when they will be alone as a staff nurse. Looking at reflection critically, one participant pointed out that she believes RJW would help her to plan for future action as a professional nurse.

"In my storyline, I need to find patient, then the story can give me "something" to think then I write a story about the interaction between humans and disease and intervention by health care workers (nurses, doctors). If I don't know about the disease, I need to study and search for it. (I look at myself in the process of giving nursing care). Then I know that "something" is going on, reflect on, not let the event go by and pass. I know I can't take action first, I need to plan. Reflection means when I want to take action of any forms of nursing tasks then, I look at what I need to do; take initiative and go ahead, or I should take precautions and just inform other more knowledgeable ones."

(Nouri, 30-35, Jan 27, 2014)

Planning for the future implies that this particular student nurse considering reflection as a learning tool to a better person. That is, she had realized with knowledge and experience acquired from practices in practicum and reflecting effectively on them, the type of learning could occur that is lifelong lasting. McAllister (2012) asserted that effective reflection helps the nurses carefully plan their actions and consciously control it to ensure it is beneficial to their patient.

It can be concluded that RJW can be a means to form professional identity among PRSN providing taking into consideration the role of each individual in the workplace. Taking appropriate action is a part of the process of reflection; so, the value of effective reflection can be realized in this process of forming professional identity when the novice student nurses are able to take action independently and make decisions. The summary of the above discussion is illustrated in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Summary of Themes for Self-awareness through RJW

Themes	Sub-themes

A) Learning Needs	a) Nursing Fields
	b) English Language
	    1) Grammar
	    2) vocabulary

B) Development of Competence	a)Avoid Automation b) Reflection on & in Action
C) Levels of Criticality	a) Evaluation & Decision-making b)Critical Thinking
D) Forming Professional Self-identity	a) The Role of Individuals b) plan for the Future

5.4 Expressing Challenges of Reflective Journal Writing

Some studies have declared the usefulness of reflective journal writing in recognizing and expressing the feeling which if not expressed, it may have negative consequences for the novice student nurses. For instance, Jasper (1999) stated that RJW activity is a means that the learners can express the feelings towards journaling in the form of writing. Having known the effectiveness of journaling in the process of learning, the participants expressed their mixed feelings and emotions about reflective journals (Boud et al., (1985). One participant voiced out about her feelings and reflective journal as:

"I will write about my feeling in my journal. RJ is different, we can express our feeling and we will learn differently through RW."

<div align="right">(Ayesha, 46, Jan 27, 2014)</div>

The interviewees pointed out that journaling can be a safe place to express the emotions of their clinical posting. A participant in the focus group stated that:

"Reflection is when we need to be able to put ourselves in others' shoes, and I am positive about RJ, I can transfer my feeling on paper. I can recognize my feeling about nursing care. I can tell what I feel about the patients and their relatives, staff nurse, and doctors."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

Hwang et al., (2018) stated that student nurses perceived reflection as an opportunity to express their emotions on the nursing practice and to recognize the underlying reasons. However, the interviewees reported their feeling of reservation regarding reflective journaling. Reservation refers to discouraging feelings regarding RJW activity. Despite the fact that they were clearly aware of the benefits of journaling, most of them expressed their criticism of writing journal practices. Their ideas about the discouraging challenges related to reflective journal writing were presented in the following section.

Workload. In general, the nursing education curriculum is well-known as an overloaded program as the student nurses are to accomplish the requirements of their course in a short time limit. Although they were aware of the benefits of RJW, they perceived it as extra work. Chirema (2007) stated that the issue of time involved in RJW was a main concern among many participants. One interviewee, Yun pointed out: "when I think about it, I learn more from my RJ. Sometimes, I feel stressed in writing RJ because we are too busy to write RJ." Another interviewee expressed her idea about time for reflective journaling and stated about reflection before reflective writing.

"Reflective journal is a good practice. Being busy student nurses, we don't have time to reflect on ourselves, but RJ helps us reflect on our previous activity."   (Anna, 55-56, Jan 15, 2014)

Unlike others, in the focus group interview, the following PRSN expressed ideas about the time factor of writing RJ:

"…for us, reflective writing recalls memory [back] on the nursing practices. It is more on our patients. It is a precious time for me when I recall what had happened, what I had done, and now, I need to write. It takes time for all of these; writing and re-writing, looking for the vocabularies and using the right words. Because reflective journal writing is about what you have done and what you should do. So, if it did not have a positive result, it was not a good experience, it means there must be something we or other people should do for patients or should not do for them."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

In line with the above quote, Braine (2009) found out that reflection is a personal and individual mental activity and it is not an easy skill to develop and reflective journaling is a time-consuming activity.

Redundancy. Another challenge was expressed by the interviewees was the redundancy of RJW activity. To provoke the participants' ideas, the researcher uttered a statement about the role of reflective journaling as a strong learning tool in the nursing study. They explicitly questioned the reason for reflective journaling. One participant admitted:

"Because I write my diary every day, RJ is simple for me. But I turn blue when I want to write my journal, I think 'why we need to write it'."

(Nouri, 7-9, Jan 27, 2014)

In the curriculum for the present participants, RJW will be used as an assessment tool. However, Braine (2009) maintained that in case of absence of assessment, the students raised the issue of reason for doing this assignment. Their

complaint related to the redundancy of journal writing was also expressed in the focus group interview:

"…actually, in doing RJW as homework, it doesn't make us 'a reflector' mainly because we are not encouraged much. As far as we are doing RW for a mark and nor as a lesson for our life, we do not think deeply about the situation, mostly because I am afraid of the lecturer's condemnation. So, I try to write a good story, and not from inside of me."

(FGI Jan 8, 2014)

Also, there was a complaint of stress and pressure in writing journals. For example, one of the interviewees pointed out "why we should write it." According to these comments, the implementation of reflective journal practice can affect the quality of reflection. As one of the interviewees in the focus group stated:

"I am really stressed before and feel released after writing RJ and think why we should write it. I usually don't write about why I take that particular action. I am aware of my tutor reaction & her scolding."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

Much has been written about the subject of reflection, and many brought attention to issues and challenges concerning its relevance to the learning process, and to professional practice (Coward, 2011; Conte, 2015).

Reluctant. Another concern that some participants implied was their unwillingness toward journaling. For instance, Yun said "I have no feeling; no experience in nursing; so, writing RJ is not interesting for me." She explicitly expressed her unwillingness for journaling. Since some don't enjoy the act of journaling that much, they could not get the benefit from this activity. Chirema (2007) found out that some of the participants questioned why they should writing while they can speak and they are better to express their feeling in spoken form. It is evident that besides their positive opinions and remarks on reflective journaling, it

was regarded as an additional burden to them when they have to write in English. Likewise, a participant in the focus group stated:

"…I am good at speaking in English and I am good in writing in Bahasa Malay (BM), but when I am translating my writing into English, the words are not suitable, and my writing is not good. Writing in BM is more enjoyable for me."

(FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

In support of the above quote, Mahlanze and Sibiya (2017) maintained that student nurses' language abilities in expressing their feelings should be taken into consideration. In order to nurture open communication through reflective journal writing, they suggested that nurse educators must take serious actions to listen to student nurses' voices to nurture open communication. In doing so, they can improve their student-centeredness in the nursing curriculum. The student nurses require a learning environment that is conducive with appropriate guidance that they feel welcomed and confident

Inhibitions. Among many elements that the participants voiced out, one fact appeared obvious; that they wanted to build a professional relationship with others including their tutors, with the staff nurses whom they were assigned, or with any other health care providers during their clinical posting. Due to tutors' workload, student nurses would go to reflective journals to express their thoughts, points of view, and feelings. This type of attitude represents student nurses' attitude of willing to communicate. For instance, Siti admitted:

"A lot of things happen in clinical posting, RJ can help us to remember. I think, I reflect back, I jet down, little by little, I created my journal just to tell others what happened during her practice in clinical posting."

(Siti, 47, Jan 15, 2014)

She is willing to tell her tutor about her practice, but how far she could go in her report. However, some interviewees expressed some inhibitions that did not let

them be honest in their reflective journal writing that inhibited to reach the goal of establishing a true relationship. They believed that this professional relationship, especially with their tutors, could be helpful in their learning process. Among the inhibitions to communication, however, they frankly expressed their true feelings and attitudes of "distrust" and "fear" towards their tutors and staff nurses. Chirema (2007) stated the reasons for the learners' inability to reflect are the lack of trust and support from the teacher necessary for learning to occur. One interviewee openly stated that she doesn't trust her tutor to write everything.

> "I don't trust my tutor to tell the truth. I am afraid to tell them the truth in case of losing my face. I can be closer to my tutor and be more honest with my tutor. I write RJ when there is something I can't tell others. So, I write in RJ, I feel free, then. Although I can't trust others, I decide to write about the event anyway because it helped me learn and I want to tell my tutor."
>
> (Anna, 15-17, Jan 15, 2014)

Similarly, another participant expressed her ideas about journaling as a tool to communicate to tell her tutors what she has done during clinical posting:

> "RJ is useful to use it as evidence of what I have done during clinical posting. RJW helps me to have a better attitude towards patients, towards nursing care. My tutors have already told us to be honest in our RW writing."
>
> (Siti, 37-39, Jan 15, 2014)

As one interviewee pointed out about honesty, one of the reasons that inhibited the student nurses to write with their true heart was to avoid being scolded by others including their tutors and staff nurses.

> "I write something my tutor likes to hear. I just say something nice. I try to avoid scolding from my tutor. I know if I tell her that staff nurse didn't help me, she would say that I should not arrive late. I like to write about the staff nurse who was not friendly and didn't want to supervise me. But I was afraid. I like to write about my actual feeling, but I am afraid of my tutor."
>
> (Fatin, 36-38, Jan 17, 2014)

Similar to what the above interviewee stated, Anna strongly against telling the truth in their journals. She admitted:

"I am afraid, if I write about my mistake in many ways, the tutor may have a negative impression about me."   (Anna, 60, Jan 15, 2014)

Varagona and Hold (2019) believed that nurse tutors require guidance to gain students' trust and avoid losing their trust; the tutors need to examine their personal traits, words, and behaviors in order to establish a caring student-tutor relationship built on trust. In this case, a true reflection would appear in the journals.

Overall, the pre-registered student nurses made a constructive criticism in their interviews about the elements that concerned them in their journal writing. It should be noted that they were aware of the confidentiality of the research that allowed them to voice out their feelings; they felt this way so that they could explain the reason behind their uneasiness. Although certain mixed messages expressed by the interviewees, they demonstrated their points of view and feeling about reflective journal writing in a very honest way; one participant said, "she would turn blue when she had to write journal", other said "she got confidence in her nursing practice through RJW. " All together, they believed that this activity was beneficial for them to improve their ability in reflection on their previous experiences that were essential in developing professional knowledge and skills. However, there were some participants who expressed some challenges regarding journaling. It should be considered that developing enthusiasm for journal writing is a matter of time. Thus, convincing the learners that journaling was for their own benefit and with support from the educational bodies, they could achieve success in the process of gradual learning and development.

5.5 Perceptions of the Guideline in Reflective Journal Writing

This section will discuss the Pre-Registered Student Nurses' perception on the use of the guideline for their reflective journal writing. During the interviews the element of using guideline was very prominent in the participants' talk. It seemed that student nurses need to be guided in their RJW to focus on learning. Thus, the element of using the guideline was discretely analyzed and relatively discussed.

To recap, during preliminary studies, the researcher had found out that reflective journaling is a part of Fundamental Nursing II; a course in their first year, second semester. There is a two hour tutorial for reflective journal writing and then, they sit for an exam when they are in the second year the second term of their three year program. The exam carries 10% of the total mark for Fundamental Nursing II; without which there is a case of failure of such exam. In this two-hour tutorial, the nurse tutor introduces theories of reflection and reflective writing to PRSN. As a teaching strategy, and for the student nurses to be more familiar with RJ, subsequently, a guideline (Appendix H) of how to write reflective journal writing is also given to them. The student nurses, then are expected to follow this guideline in their regular reflective journal writing; (more on the guideline was explained in Chapter Three). Pre-registered student nurses in our study have considered reflective journaling as a practice for effective reflection, better learning, and a means of passing the course. The PRSN had reiterated in their interviews that after the instruction by their tutors, it is the guideline that helped them the most to do the RJW tasks. Almost all of the participants had positive ideas about using the guideline in the process of reflective journaling. The following section were organized into subtopics on the participants' perceptions of using the guideline

Increases Familiarity. Writing is not a very welcoming activity among student nurses. Since they are not in favor of this language skill, a guideline can be of great help to these students. The guideline plays a role in helping PRSN to get familiar with what to write about and how to write reflective journals. One interviewee stated:

> "As a beginner, I admit it is important. We need GL to write. At first, I was blurred, and then with the guideline, I was ok. At beginning we need GL, because we don't have knowledge on how to write."

<div align="right">(Safura, 40-41, Jan 21, 2014)</div>

Likewise, the aim of the guideline is to direct the PRSN to write their journals. In the line with the above, Taylor-Haslip (2010) stated that a structure format or a clear instruction for journaling is helpful to engage student nurses in the reflective activity. Ayesha pointed out that even they were given examples of the guideline to tell them how to write their journals.

> "…the guideline helps us how to write RW. My tutor gives us GL to write RW. Sometimes she talks about different stages of writing. She even gives us examples of how to write." (Ayesha, 50-52, Jan 27, 2014)

In the focus group, the use of the guideline was discussed, and they had a positive idea about it. They stated without the guideline, they are not sure what to write.

> "…when I was asked to do RJ, I was not sure what to write about. Before writing RJ, I had no idea on how to write it. But GL showed us the way and we answered the questions. We use the guidelines, and we write the same for everybody [patients]." (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

It is clear that the guideline increases the familiarity to write more acceptable reflective journals.

Encourages Educational Writing. Some of the interviewees stated that for writing journal they need to have a storyline and yet to write a reflective journal. They admitted that the guideline helped them to have a better understanding of this educational writing. Likewise, another one expressed her idea as:

> "The guideline makes RJ understandable, because my English is not that good, GL can be really helpful. I can get some ideas through questions. Honestly, no GL, I am lazy to do RW." (Fatin, 57-59, Jan 17, 2014)

In support of this idea, Constantinou and Kuys (2013) asserted that reflective journals that are written through the guided reflection are beneficial in facilitating reflective practice in learners.

> "I use my case in hospital as a medium. While sticking to the guidelines, there are mistake I can tell the best of the worse stories of nursing case, and what I can do to make it better." (FGI Jan 8, 2014)

They stated that with the guideline she knew what to write, that was more interesting and more educational, and without it her RJ is not very good.

Prevents forgetting. During writing, PRSN could follow different stages in *the* guideline to write their journals. With the guideline, the burden of what to write and how to do it was lessened. Nouri admitted that with the guideline, she was sure that she wouldn't forget anything. In the study conducted by Taylor-Haslip (2010), students become more focused than just reporting the nursing tasks they accomplished and demonstrated a high level of reflection in their reflective journals. Similarly, another interviewee pointed out that even the guideline helped her write in English as she could focus on the questions:

"When I wrote for the first time, I couldn't believe I did it. Thanks to the guideline, I could write it in English and no problem in that. The questions in the guideline prevent us from forgetting certain event, certain situation."

(Siti, 52-54, Jan 15, 2014)

In the focus group interview, discussion was positive about the use of the guideline for reflective journaling as it helped them to remember what they wanted to write. They admitted that:

"…guidelines help us to stick to what we are doing on that time. With the guideline, we improved our RW by thinking of 'who' 'what' 'how' and many other questions that helped us write. I enjoy the part when I need to use my memory and recall back during the writing. I have less difficulty in finding English words to write but finding the words that express my feeling is important for me, because I want others to feel what I have felt when they read what I wrote."   (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

From the structure of the guideline, PRSN could get familiarity with the nature of reflective journaling. They can answer the questions in each stage and write about their ideas on the real-life incident from their clinical posting. One interviewee stated:

"I write everything first in RJ, because I want to finish the job. Then, I remind myself to avoid that situation in the future."   (Fatin, 57-58, Jan 17, 2014)

Accordingly, they decide what to reflect on or in and what to write to have the reflective journal done. So, they tried to associate themselves with the task and the people they come into contact during their clinical posting.

Maintains the smooth process of writing. One of the concerns about writing journals was the mechanical aspects of writing. The participants pointed out that they must observe the objective rules of reflective writing stated by the school of nursing and presented by their tutors. Some of these rules included they must write in black

ink and submitted handwritten and preferably in English; no typing report is accepted. The other element is that, with the use of the guideline, they must follow a scenario of a real-life event of one incident in the clinical posting as one of the interviewees admitted that 'the first thing I need to write is a story of my experience in clinical posting.' Another one stated:

> "as for me, RJ is more like writing a scenario about the patients, their diseases and what I, as a PRSN, could do for them." (Yun, 40, Jan 15, 2014)

Likewise, in the focus group interview, the idea of having a storyline in mind can be helpful in writing a quality of journal. They emphasized that:

> "… in writing RJ, I think about how important, or beneficial is this scenario for me as a student nurse. Our reflective journal writing should contain lessons; we should show the impact of that lesson on us as SN. We need to improve the ability of telling a quality 'story-telling' in us, to improve the ability of thinking from different angles; positive or negative, and what other people think, and what society thinks. We should try to learn more from the situations, what is best for us. So, we follow the GL that made the RJ task easier, just answer the questions and get the passing mark." (FGI, Jan 8, 2014)

In their interviews, PRSN pointed out that writing about the nursing procedures, environment, and about health care providers such as doctors and staff nurses are among the main topics to write in their RJW. They stated that these significant individuals had strong impact on their learning and progress. The guideline, in this respect, plays a role of guiding them how to write by providing them questions to answer. Lena stated her ideas as:

> "I describe the details and write the scenario in my reflective journal. There, I write about who was there? What happened? Why is it happen? What should I do? And so on. When I cannot perform the exact action well that day, with RJ, I can realize how I can do better next time. When I write about these things, they help me in future action, in clinical posting. Actually, RJ helps me learn."
>
> (Lena, 48-55, Jan 27, 2014)

Overall, the guideline was viewed to have exposed pre-registered student nurses to structured reflective journaling. With the guideline, they practice journaling and improved their theoretical knowledge and incorporated it into their practical experiences.

5.6 Summary of the Findings for the Second Research Question

This chapter demonstrated the data analysis and the findings for the second research question. The main objective of this question involved the evaluation of reflective journal writing by pre-registered student nurses in developing professional knowledge and skills. The analysis of the verbatim from the Focus Group Interview (FGI) and one-on-one interviews revealed that the participants shared their ideas and knowledge in a process of learning. Furthermore, they expressed their ideas on the effectiveness of reflective journal writing in the process of their competency and forming their professional identity. In the same vein, Rassaei (2015) asserted that journaling can increase their self-confidence and help them overcome the stress of workplace learning. They undoubtedly demonstrated their positive and negative ideas about this academic activity and how RJW plays roles in their knowledge improvement, learning, and effective reflection in the journey of lifelong learning toward professionalism. The following Table 5.3 illustrates the summary discussion of the findings for the second research question.

Table 5.3

Summary of Thematic Findings of PRSN's Evaluations of RJW

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Process of Learning	A) Knowledge Improvement
	B)Collaborative Learning
	C) Effective Reflection
2. Self-Awareness	A) Learning needs
	B) Development of Competence
	C) Levels of Criticality
	D) Forming Professional Self-Identity
3.Expressing Challenges	a) Workload
	b) Redundancy
	c) Reluctant
	d) Inhibitions
4.Preception of the Guideline	a) Increase familiarity
	b) Encourages educational writing
	c) Prevent forgetting
	d) Maintains smooth process of the writing

CHAPTER 6

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE THIRD RESEARCH QUESTION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the data analysis and findings pertaining to the third research question. This section discusses and elaborates the data analysis and findings that revealed in the participants' reflective journal entries, which aims to identify the levels of reflection proposed in the Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (1990). According to the core objective related to this research question, the reflective journals as the main qualitative data under the mode of 'case study' were analyzed and the reports of finding were provided. Accordingly, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 25), a case study defined as "a case as phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context." With this description, the reflective journal entities represent the 'heart' and the boundaries are those elements such as the student nurses who contributing these journals. Since these texts are written about the real-life events of hospital practice, it can be assumed that through case study design, this study will have meaningful traits (Yin, 2008). To recap, the third research question is revisited:

Research Question 3: *What levels of reflection do the Pre-Registered Student*
Nurses reveal in their Reflective Journal Writing entries?

The strategies to work with the data to get the answer to this question can be described as follow. At the initial stage, each journal was copied to reserve the original ones in a safe place; copied versions of journals were more suitable to work with and easier for frequent references. Then, each journal was given pseudo names

and pages were numbered according to each student nurse. Each journal was read and reread thoroughly to get the feeling of the writings prior to doing the intra-case examining according to an inductive approach of content analysis. Each journal was considered unique writing done by a particular student nurse.

Each journal was representing an individual reflection upon a real-life situation of clinical practice they have experienced for a day. They described the situations narratively with their best of knowledge of medical jargons which, hopefully, the researcher has been knowledgeable due to her exposure to the situation once in her lifetime. The scenarios in the journals enriched the reader's understanding of how the writers relived their past experiences in the current situation. Accordingly, the content analysis of journals was performed in order to strive for the participants' levels of reflection in their journaling and to find out how these reflections could contribute to developing their professional knowledge and skills and to their lifelong learning. In this qualitative exploratory study, the analytical frameworks of transformative learning theory by Mezirow (1990) served as foundations for analysis and interpretation of the reflective journals. It is worth mentioning that these journals were written according to the guideline given by the nurse tutors, which contained questions that were initiated from Gibbs' theory of reflection. The guideline was explained in Chapter Three (Appendix H).

6.2 Process of Reflection through Reflective Journal Writing

Through the content analysis of the journals, it was revealed that reflective journals can contribute to PRSN's career learning and thus enable them to contribute to society and helping them to construct their identity to practice in the community of practice in a more competent manner. Consequently, these pieces of writing were

organized according to identified units of thought to shape the emerging themes. These segments, then, were classified into larger categories; a more valid and accurate classification of units of thought that repeated, rather regularly, by the participants in their reflective journals. Moreover, during the text analysis of the PRSN's reflective journals, it was noted that themes were interrelated, overlapped, and were not independent of each other. That is, different components were not isolated from each other, but influencing one another that indicates internal homogeneity of the findings. This discussion is illustrated in Figure 6.1.
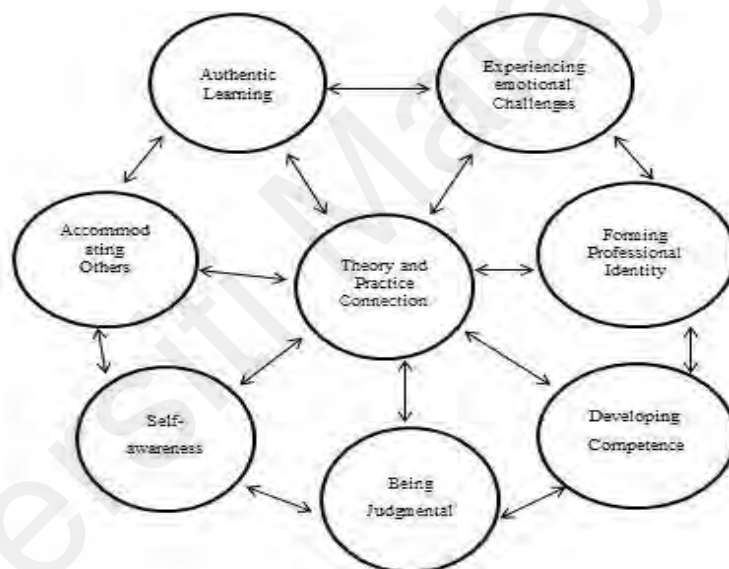

Figure 6.1. Interrelated thematic categories of reflective journal writing

The most noticeable recurrent themes and sub-themes were identified, and classifications were formed as: 1) descriptive content level of reflection, 2) Practical process level of reflection, and 3) critical premise level of reflection.

6.2.1 Descriptive Content Level of Reflection

In this section the content analysis of RJW revealed that the RJW entries were involved in a range of general descriptions of the situations. These descriptions were

related to the clinical posting; such as general information about the day and the time of practice, the specialty of the hospital ward, patient's personal information and particulars about his or her physical illness, the type of treatment the patient is receiving, and people around that made this real-life event worth writing about, people like staff nurses, doctors, Sister of the Ward, and even patients and their relative(s). Participants in their journal entries provided the reason (s) why these particular real-life incidents had stayed in their minds and why they are worth sharing with others. In this regard, Cranton (2006) asserted that content reflection is an assessment level when the learner examines a problem and describes the situation at the surface level. She believes that the student who only described the experience and explained the event (at content level) is defined as a non-reflector. The content analysis of the reflective journal entries revealed that descriptive content level of reflection presented by some subcategories namely: 1) authentic learning experience, 2) accommodating and compliance to others, 3) experiencing emotional challenges. In the following section, each subcategory will be discussed in detail.

6.2.1.1 Authentic Learning Experience

The content analysis of the journals revealed that pre-registered student nurses perceived clinical posting as an effective and useful practice for their knowledge and skills. As a novice student nurses, they revealed that the situation of clinical posting could provide opportunities for real and authentic learning.

Active involvement. Some participants underlined in their journals that when they got a chance to practice nursing tasks with a real person and then, their effort was acknowledged by a superior; it had a positive impact on their minds. Active

involvement with a patient in a critical condition was a scenario one of the participants wrote in her journal. Yun quoted in her first Reflective Journal (RJ1):

> When I reported to the staff nurse that the vital signs of the patient under ventilator were dropping, the code for CRP was called and I saw how the doctors and staff nurses are trying to save the patient. Then, the Sister asked me to do the resuscitation to learn. Although the patient couldn't be saved, I did CPR to a real person for the first time. Of course, I was afraid at the beginning, but I learned a good lesson, I did my best in giving CRP with correct skills and techniques which helped me to improve my knowledge and experience.

The above fragment implied that the participant described the situation as authentic when she could use her knowledge on CPR on a real person for the first time. That is, this educational situation had provoked her ability to reflection upon her performance that contributed to her future nursing profession. In support of the above, Burdina (2013) stated that reflective writing would place the student into more active involvement in their learning. In this condition, students learn in the more personalized process by experiencing a less fearful climate which is more conducive to learning. In another instance, a participant mentioned that in a clinical posting, she got familiarity with a situation to engage her related theoretical experiences. For example, Siti quoted in her Reflective Journal number four (RJ4):

> I knew what dementia is but dealing with a patient with dementia was something else, it was difficult to communicate with her. Since I was with a real person with such a problem for a first time, I used every opportunity to learn from this situation.

This fragment implies that the student's active participation was the first step to reflection. Conte (2013) maintained that when students write about the new situation that causes dilemma or initiate concern, it can show the importance of reflection for tutors to make better decisions that is appropriate to students' professional practice.

Encouraging. In describing a real-life situation, the participants maintained that practicing nursing tasks in a clinical area is very encouraging for reflection and learning. Safura quoted her idea of learning through a real environment in her (RJ2&5&6):

> When we are in the clinical environment, we are in a supportive environment provided by health care members. We observe the activities of people in this environment, reflect upon it, and we learn from it. We reflect on real-life incidents, for health education, and when we learn, we feel good about it. Everything is real.

According to the above fragment, it can be implied that student nurses described the authentic situation of clinical posting as encouraging; that is, they got a chance to reflect on the real-life events for the sake of learning. That is, clinical posting exposed the participants to real setting and this helped them learn nursing care in a variety of situations. In line with the above, Chirema (2007) asserted that reflective journal writing can develop the learners' self-awareness about how well they can learn from the workplace experience.

At the content level of reflection, most PRSN described their observations and active involvement in the workplace can lead to their authentic learning experiences; which were a part of the process of developing knowledge and skill useful for their future. Furthermore, they described that the presence of significant others in clinical posting provided them with opportunities to see how more experienced others could play major roles in their professional knowledge.

6.2.1.2 Accommodating and Compliance to Others

Nursing has considered a team-work profession and yet it strongly relies on the competence of an individual. For novice student nurses, the presence of others

in clinical posting plays a significant role in their learning and knowledge development.

Team-work. In the analysis of journals, the rule of staff nurses, their peers, doctors, and even the patients was reflected as substantial sources of authentic learning situations. That is, the novice student nurses' engagement in various authentic learning experiences with the more knowledgeable ones substantiated their learning. They indicated that other members of health care provided had motivated them toward giving nursing care more professionally. This competency could not be acquired without the cooperation of other health team members. For the novice student nurses, the clinical posting is overwhelming with multi-layer activities of nursing tasks that are being performed by competent members of the health care group. Studies on RJW have proven the impact of significant positive effects of others on student nurses' learning (Epp, 2008; Mann et al., 2009; Bjerkvik & Hilli, 2019). In her (RJ1), Fatin emphasized that 'in a difficult situation, like hospital setting, learning through observation of what staff nurses were doing could be very a precious opportunity for learning. Likewise, Siti indicated her idea in her (RJ3) like this:

> …..in a clinical posting, supportive staff nurses in a time of crisis could provide learning condition, and their well cooperation and effective communication could make the situation conducive for student nurses.

Therefore, being involved in this new learning situation, the novice student nurses could ease the process of learning in a professional setting provided that they could receive support and cooperation from staff nurses and other more experienced ones in practicum. In addition, Anna explained how team-work could reduce stress at work. She quoted in her (RJ8):

.....when I saw how staff nurses and a doctor were trying hard to save a patient, I offered my help. A staff nurse accepted and let me help them in such a critical condition. She shared her knowledge by saying what I could do at that time. This incident had highlighted in my mind because her openness on using other's hands and how working in a group could decrease tensions and increase productivity toward nursing care. I really appreciated her that I could help and learn.

This excerpt implied that in a practicum, working with other significant individuals could be a source of developing knowledge and skills. In the same vein, another participant, Safura, wrote about her reflection on other nurses in her (RJ6):

…. working in hospital assisted me to improve my communication skills with patients and their relatives. Now, I know that patients are real people with real feelings that I have to be cautious about. Besides, I had learned that communication with staff nurses helped me to develop my social skills in how to deal with patients as well as other health team members.

In line with the above fragment on the concept of teamwork, Oldland, et al., (2017) worked on the learners' perception of team-based learning. Learners stated that through written reflection they can shape their learning style, develop their teamwork skills, and improve professional clinical behavior. In this regard, Nouri wrote in her (RJ6&1):

A skillful nurse knows how to communicate and we, as student nurses are looking for supportive individuals to do our jobs better.

That is, learning through supports by the team helps the learners to develop better communication styles, enhance listening skills, and increase confidence that, in turn, led to the development of clinical and professional characteristics of high-quality nursing practice (Oldland, et al., 2017).

Further, being observant of other health team members and working with them gave the novice student nurses the idea of how they want to be in the future.

Furthermore, it was reiterated in the participants' RJW that the cooperation with other health care members has another benefit as well. Lena in her (RJ3) and Siti in her (RJ1) mentioned that cooperation with another more knowledgeable person in the health care team could help student nurses to avoid mistakes and seeking help from them was a way to prevent complications and possible wrongdoing in their nursing care.

The role of the patient's family member was also emphasized in their reflective journals. In fact, the family member was considered one of the team members that can influence the patient's well-being. One participant quoted about the role of the family member in the patient's health progress in her (RJ6):

> ….as we [members of health care team] all have obligations to care for patients in the process of their well-being; we should value the role of their family members, the loved ones, and their friends. That is, we should consider their important role….. We learn to see how these people can be a source of help and motivation for the patients to get well.

This quotation implies that reflection on observing supportive behavior from others towards patients is healthy and can be spotted only in an authentic situation.

Role model. However, in their journals, there was some evidence on how the novice student nurses looked at others and learned from them even though they might not perform their tasks as positively as they expected. In other words, the novice student nurses observed these members of health care providers as sole role models. In this regard, Yun in her (RJ2) quoted:

> .… my friend and I had just finished changing the patient's cloth and arranging his bed; the patient seemed very tired and wanted to rest. We were tired and hungry as well for working for almost three hours; then the staff nurse asked us to take his vital signs, then we were scolded by the patient. I was in tears, and I didn't expect any reaction from the patient whom we spent a lot of time with.

Moreover, it was not the time for taking the vital signs. I hold my tears but surprised why the staff nurse did not pay attention to the patient's condition at that moment and paid no respect to us as Student Nurses. This incident stayed in my mind because I know I don't want to be like her [staff nurse] in the future.

This thorough description of the situation indicated that this particular staff nurse can be a role model, even though she didn't project a favorable behavior towards the student nurse and the patient. Although it can be an isolated case, the staff nurse made that novice student nurse be a better nurse in the future, as the Sister of the Ward who let her do the CPR on a real person. The participant reflected on the people around her, and she was cautious of their behavior, the one who gave her good feeling about herself and another one who she would avoid by all means. They projected the way she would like to be when she enters the workforce. These types of observation have another benefit for novice student nurses, that is, they can see the nursing profession deals with the life of people and it is considered highly teamwork. In this regard, Lestander et al., (2016) stated that reflection on practice can contribute to workplace competency, professional behavior, and the patient's safety.

In summary, under the category of descriptive content reflection, the elements of accommodating and compliance of others were explained. These elements with their sub-categories of teamwork and the role model are influential in the novice student nurses' workplace professional behavior. The following section, under the content level of reflection the category of emotional challenges in reflective journaling will be discussed.

6.2.1.3 Experiencing Emotional Challenges

Besides the variety of learning opportunities of real-life incidences of practicum, the excitement and challenging situations of clinical obligations and

nursing cares were described in their reflective journals as overwhelming experiences.

Firm and friendly attitude. It was frequently stated in the reflective journals that the student nurses are not the only individuals who are in direct contact with the patients but their relatives are also present in their lives. They stated that during the implementation of the nursing tasks dealing with the patients' relatives was very challenging. Considering that these people are under stress and always ask for something to ease the pain of their loved ones. As described in their journals, these situations were required by student nurses, staff nurses and even other members of the health- care group to behave differently. Sometimes, these behaviours were seen as inconsiderate by the patient's relatives. But being firm and friendly is the only trait. Yun quoted in her journal (RJ4) that being firm and friendly sometimes is challenging:

> When I heard the mother of one of the patients was scolding staff nurse of why she couldn't see her son's Patient's Case Note (PSN). I wondered at first why mother is shouting and speaking in a loud voice. But the staff nurse and doctor told her about her son's progress and she could ask him. They said it was the hospital policy. It was interesting to see how the staff nurse made her quiet, and it was challenging for me to see that nurses encounter such a situation that is not medical, but social, and they need to be firm and friendly.

In this excerpt, the participant had emphasized that working professionally could be challenging and tough. She had reflected on this simple incident and shared her thought on the variety of roles that a nurse must acquire and learn in a working arena. In accordance with the above idea, Moon (1999) asserted that the student nurses can acquire self- understanding during the process of reflective journal writing along with recognizing their feelings, attitudes, and realizing their levels of cognitive and affective dimension in learning.

Decision making. Among the scenarios written in their journals, the participants explained that they must be attentive and focussed in the practicum. In fact, one participant described a situation very life-threatening to the patient if she was not observant and did not take action fast. That is, she had encountered a situation that she had to use her prior knowledge and experience to take action fast. She described the concept of 'time' in relation to giving nursing care as challenging situations. Safura quoted in her (RJ5):

> When I heard a patient is screaming out of chest pain, I couldn't do anything at first and I was stunt for some seconds. Then, I reflect back on the situation and my knowledge, I applied Oxygen to the patient via an oxygen mask. Shortly, the patient had become calm before doctor arrived, and I could handle the situation gently and calmly. It was a very challenging situation that I had to act fast.

In this excerpt, the student nurse revealed about the challenges she had faced before everything got back to normal. In this incident, she used her propositional and professional knowledge to make a decision and take an action. According to Higgs and Titchen (2000), this knowledge is required for the student nurses to make a decision. As she mentioned, this incident was exciting and challenging because she could make a decision on a time. Likewise, in describing her experience, Anna wrote about an interesting and yet exciting incident at work in her (RJ2):

> When I was at the night duty, I was assigned to attend to an unable patient who received O2. I realized that she is anxious. When I talked to her and asked her what made her worried. She mentioned her O2 flow. I promised her to take care of it even when she is sleeping. Patient's anxiety relieved because I kept my promise, and she thanked me for that. I find it very rewarding.

This incidence appeared exciting for her because she kept her promise to the patient and received appreciation from the patient.

Challenging situations. This situation refers to the time when a professional person was involved whose performance was under close observation by the student nurses. In any given situation, when the student nurses observed someone's performance is deviated from their training and theoretical background, they expressed and described their emotions as very intimidating and challenging. They make questions in their minds, and reflect in the action they have observed. In line with this, Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) pointed out that reflection has a strong connection between practical elements and the theoretical one in workplaces. In fact, they practice journaling and improved their theoretical knowledge and incorporated it into their practical experiences. Lena's description involved a professional body's enactment that caused a challenging situation for her. She explained in her (RJ5):

> I realized that a doctor is visiting a patient and checking her wound without washing his hands. He was also wearing long sleeves coat. As I knew the importance of hand hygiene, I wanted to tell the doctor, but I was conscious not to embarrass him in front of the patient and also, I didn't want to make the patient concerned. So, I discussed the matter with the staff nurse, and then, we decided to tell the doctor together. I learned from the staff nurse how nicely bringing up the issue to prevent the future problem.

In a clinical posting, the main requirement for the student nurses is to observe with their utmost capacity. They are asked to be attentive to other members of the health team for the sake of learning. In accordance with the above, Tarrant (2013, p.67) asserted that reflection could develop a range of skills in a person namely, "being comfortable with another person, being able to describe their practice reflectively and thoughtfully, being able to articulate their thoughts, and being able to trust another person." In the above excerpt, this student nurse observed the situation, reflected upon it, had an objection, and had doubt to bring it up-front. As excited as she became, she finally discussed the issue with the staff nurse in charge.

She wrote about her experience of a challenge in her workplace of dealing with a simple matter of whether or not to tell the doctor about his wrong practice and, not only that, how to articulate the issue to prevent future complications. This incident conveys the idea in mind that dealing with a superior, who is considered more knowledgeable, has become an issue for a student nurse in the workplace.

Moreover, Oldland et al. (2017) pointed out the role of reflection on the student nurses' professional behavior in a workplace for providing high quality and safe patient care. They found out that students reported about their increased confidence acquired through reflection and improved in their clinical knowledge and problem solving and communication skills in clinical environments. Similar to this, another participant wrote about her intimidating experience of uttering the patient's name wrong over a telephone call that she felt was challenging. Safura quoted in her (RJ1):

> I had a patient with cancer who must have special food. And I must order the kind of food according to the doctor's order by phone. As a first- timer, I was nervous and shy. I informed the staff nurse about it, she calmed me down and told me what to say. Although I tried to remember everything, on the phone I said the name of patient wrongly. I was stressed when I realized my mistake. I must have double checked the name of the patient and the right food. Although my alertness mattered when I rechecked with the staff nurse, the staff nurse had to do double work. I thought how this simple incident of a telephone call was so challenging in my profession that could end up in a disaster.

In real-life situations like hospital settings, it is normal to think that it is you as a student nurse who always faces such challenges and intimidating situation. Needless to say, whoever is attending to a patient could encounter unexpected situation. In line with the idea above, Lestander et al. (2016) found out that the student nurses realize that reflection on practice can contribute to workplace competence and the patient safety. One of the student nurses wrote about her

observation of a challenging situation that involved a doctor and an aggressive patient. Ayesha quoted in her (RJ3):

> …… patient was required to have her dressing changed. The order in the Patient's Case Note said: "first dressing by a doctor"; so, under the supervision of the staff nurse, I made the necessary equipment ready. Staff nurse and I were in the room to help a doctor. When the doctor wanted to check the patient's wound, she was in pain and slapped on the doctor's face. He continued his task of changing the dressing anyway and left the room without saying anything. It was challenging and exciting to observe a situation like that. Challenging in a way why the patient slapped the doctor who is doing his job, and exciting to see doctor continued and finished his task professionally. When I reflected back on the situation and looking at the patient's medical condition, her mental state, her level of hygiene, I could see that all because of her lack of knowledge; which I decided to educate her to increase her knowledge about her medical problem.

This quotation implies that even professional bodies could face a challenging situation that must be handled tactfully and skilfully. In line with the above, Mezirow (2000) asserted that the learners experience higher-order of conscious thought in a challenging situations of the workplace. That would manifest in the change in their behavior and the underlying values, attitudes, and beliefs. The challenges can assist them to go forward, to reach the level of personal and professional growth.

What discussed so far represents the participants' reports on their reflective journals at the descriptive level of descriptive content reflection. The above fragments from the participants' reflective journal entries were around the incidents they experienced in authentic situation of clinical posting, the roles that significant others played in providing these experiences, and the exciting and challenging situations that considered conducive for their learning and developing their professional knowledge and skills. The above discussion is summarized in Figure 6.

2. What follows in the next section is the discussion of the practical level revealed in the participants' RJW entries.
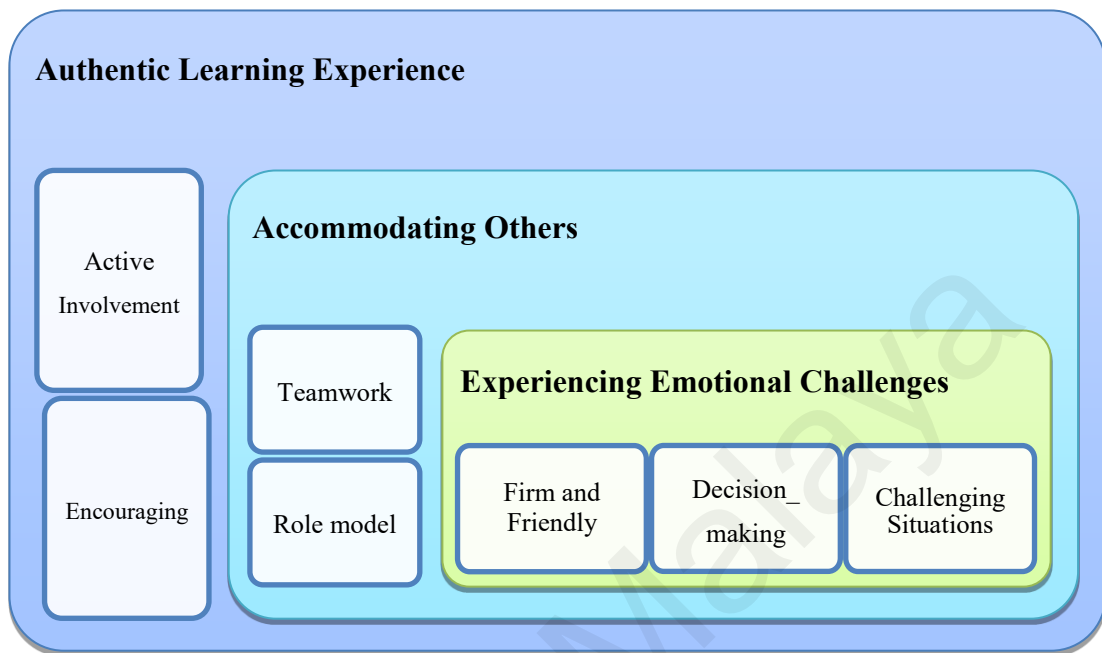

Figure 6.2. Summary of content level of reflection revealed in reflective journals

6.2.2 Practical Process Level of Reflection

The content level, discussed in the previous section, was the descriptive stage of reflection in their journals, whereas this part discusses more practical aspects of their nursing practice in the practicum. The discussion below, in general, is more advanced than the previous one; that is, it is less descriptive, yet it is more directly related to the participants' actual nursing practice. These nursing practices are involving a range of the real-life events happening in the clinical posting. Additionally, Kim (2013) has pointed out that reflective journals provide more flexible choices in the content and process reflection on learning experiences. This enabled student nurses to ask questions, challenge confusion, and make a connection between concepts and relevant practice.

Likewise, Ludgren and Poell (2016) pointed out that a reflective process could be started at the level of content and process reflection. However, they recapped that emancipatory learning is the result of reflection at this level. Mezirow (1991) believed that, at this level, when the learners know how to do the task; and realize how well that task was done by other members of the health community; they are at the level of process reflection reaching the critical thinking level. Accordingly, at the level of process reflection, PRSN may contemplate on how these nursing tasks are being implemented by more knowledgeable bodies like staff nurses or when they supervised them in performing nursing care. When they are performing nursing tasks; in fact, they are actively participating in the practical process of learning (Ludgren and Poell, 2016). The indebt content analysis revealed that at the practical process level, the participants demonstrated a series of performances with similar repertoires categorized as the subthemes. These repertoires were represented namely as, 1) theory and practice connection, 2) self-awareness, 3) forming a professional identity. The following section discusses these subthemes in detail.

6.2.2.1 Theory and Practice Connection

Following the description of the context of learning, learners questioned the objective of this learning situation. They were inspired by the clinical postings and aware that these settings were provided for them to learn at a more professional level. So, their journals were toward a more concrete description of implementing actual nursing performance that is more practically driven. Subsequently, they go beyond the surface level of merely descriptive and talked about the process of real nursing practice they had experienced. Likewise, Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) declared the reflective journaling is an effective way of getting-to-know and causing awareness of knowledge among learners.

The PRSN stated that they were required to have learned the theories in their tutorials and have practiced some of that theoretical knowledge in simulation labs. According to the nature of their profession, it is essential for them to be competent and knowledgeable about the theories of nursing tasks before going to clinical posting. That is, they must equip themselves with enough knowledge and skills about the patients they are going to be assigned and responsible to take care of during clinical posting. In the practicum, they engage in various experiences that helped them connect their knowledge on the concepts to the practice. This process was reported by participants as being important for their development. In support of the above, the literature of reflective journaling has documented that the primary role of the reflective journal is to improve the learners' content knowledge (e.g. Schon, 1984; Chirema, 2007; Mann et al 2009; Moon 2009). This content knowledge could be constructed upon a professional and yet the individual way to build a connection within theory and practice that appeared in reflective journal writing (Jasper, 2003). Ayesha wrote about an incident that helped her learned in her (RJ4):

> …..when I realized that the patient is having active bleeding, I knew why staff nurse told me I need to wear surgical gloves and gown. I could see what the doctor and the staff nurse were doing, and I knew now what immediate actions to take to save a patient.

The above excerpt implies that the participant's awareness of her knowledge reflected in her practice. She was able to self-observe her own knowledge and skill and be aware of others' practice for the sake of learning in her future profession.

Association. In their Reflective Journals, the participants stated that practicing in the clinical posting helped them integrate their tacit knowledge acquired in the classroom and used it in the real practice. They have noticed that their ability of making association is vital to their objectives of developing professional knowledge

and skills. In support to this idea, Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) asserted that reflection for competence development has a strong connection between practical elements and the theoretical ones in work places. The participants in their study juxtaposed RJ practices with increase in competency in various levels of nursing. Yun quoted in her (RJ2)

> ,…when I heard the machine for intravenous therapy is ringing; I went inside the room to check. I moved my eyes along the line of tube to see any abnormality, nothing was wrong, and then I noticed the client's chest is not moving. I called the staff nurse in charge, when doctor arrived, shortly after he announced that patient had passed away.

In this fragment, she revisited her knowledge of classroom and remembered the simulation lab training for patients under serum therapy in this real situation. She had admitted that she knew the sound of intravenous machine represented a difficulty [blockage] in the flow of drips. So, she checked it first. She reflected on this incident and wrote about her ability to associate her tacit knowledge to her practice. Lestander et al., (2016) found out that the student nurses realize that reflection on practice can contribute to work place competency and the patient safety. Another participant, Nouri reported her experience in this regard in her (RJ2):

> In the morning shift, I was assigned with a patient with Hospital Acquired Pneumonia. I knew that correct positioning is vital for this type of patients. Changing the dressing of his large bedsore wound was in order, and it was my task to do it. When I positioned him to start the dressing, I realized he has difficulty in breathing. So, I stopped my task, applied saturated O2 for him and informed the staff nurse, then the doctor. I knew that safety is very important, correct breathing is a priority.

This quotation implies that in this situation, she avoided routine nursing care and reflected back on the patient's condition and what was the best to do at that point of time. In support to the above statement, Conte (2015) stated that students would reveal elements of critical reflection if they can link past, present and future

knowledge, integrate cognitive and emotional experience, and plan for future learning. These are parts of reflection practices that can help students to reframe problems and solve problem accordingly. Another participant revealed about reflecting on her tacit knowledge that when utilizing it on the right time it is encouraging. Lena quoted in her (RJ3):

> I was assigned with a patient with diabetic ulcer on his foot. During morning visit, the doctor touched my patient's wound without changing his gloves. I noticed that doctor has a long sleeve coat on. I was concerned about the contamination but wasn't brave enough to comment. I knew diabetic patients are prone to get infection very easily. I wondered why doctor didn't pay attention. And when he was told about his wrong practice, he just said "no time!"

This Student Nurse knew about the procedures of changing dressing on this particular patient. She was knowledgeable about the disease [diabetes] and related complications [infection]. The action, she took also was initiated from her tacit knowledge, from the theory she had learned in the classroom. Another participant shared her experience about reflecting on her knowledge as following. Siti wrote in her (RJ4):

> I was taught about epileptic seizures, but I have not seen it before. My patient that day was diagnosed with epileptic who could tell others when he is going to have the attack. When I was taking his vital signs, he told me he was going to have his attack now. I told him to lie down on bed. But the attack was too quick. Patient's jaws fixed, pupils dilated, jerky contraction started, and excessive saliva was coming out of his mouth. I rang the bell, and before staff nurse arrived I had positioned his head to breathe easily. I knew at the time of attack that these patients' tongues would fall back and cause obstruction to the air way. So, my fast action was to turn his head to open the airway. I also kept the side rail up to prevent him from falling. Staff nurse performed suction to clear the airway. I stayed with patient till seizure ended and record the time.

In this excerpt, a well description of patient's condition during the seizure attack was given which clearly demonstrates the student nurses' knowledge about the outbreak and her immediate action that revealed her ability of relating theories to a

real-life event and practice. In the same view with the above, Shield (1995) maintained reflection on the situation can be a source of learning for an individual. It is possible that a learner forget the situation but not the experience. And reflective journals could enhance the durability of the experience from the situation and improve the learning. Likewise, Boud et al (1985) stated that through reflection the mind of the learners anticipate learning from the experience. The above quotations imply that clinical posting was considered as an opportunity for the PRSN to use their knowledge on nursing care. Besides, their self-awareness was improved, a conscious development of providing better nursing care that contributed to their preparation for future nursing profession.

6.2.2.2 Self-awareness

It was commonly quoted in their reflective journals by the participants that in practicum they had developed a sense of self-awareness towards their practice and themselves. That is, their involvement in a range of experiences in the clinical posting helped them to develop self-awareness towards the knowledge and skills required for the nursing profession as well as towards their practice.

Become Tactful. The concept of being tactful refers to the ability to be thoughtful and considerate in the task in hand. In some cases, participants expressed their awareness of not having enough knowledge to be tactful that caused problems for their patients. This awareness comes from the reflection upon their unacceptable performance of the nursing task. They admitted that this lack of tactfulness and low competence could lead to making mistakes that put the patient's life in danger. Similarly, Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) stated that reflective journaling is valuable

and effective in getting-to-know and causing awareness of knowledge among learners. Fatin expressed her awareness in her (RJ5):

> …..I knew that patient under blood transfusion must be monitored closely for any reaction or complications. However, when my patient complained of pain on her arm and drowsiness and asked me to discontinue the infusion flow, I told her I can't do that without the doctor's permission. I left the patient to do my other duties. When I remembered [think of] her, I felt guilty. The patient had faced some complications. I feel guilty and I should take immediate action and stopped the infusion and informed the staff nurse. I knew I have done my job wrongly. I failed to provide good nursing care for my patient; however, I tried to establish bound with my patient.

The above quotation indicates the impact of the student nurse's reflection on her awareness on nursing care during practicum. Her awareness that caused by reflection upon her nursing care could contribute to her learning to prevent future complications in for other patients. In support of this view, Oldland et al., (2017) found out that students reported their increased confidence acquired through reflection and journaling and their clinical knowledge has improved and their problem solving and communication skills in clinical environments.

Self-confidence. Being confident is a professional behavior in a workplace particularly in the nursing field. In some occasions, self-awareness was explained by reflecting on their observation in practicum. While observing other members of the health team, the realization of their strengths and weaknesses would occur that contributed to their learning. Safura, in this regard, reported in her (RJ3):

> While I was checking the patient's vital signs, I realized her temperature is high. Immediately, the staff nurse and I applied a warm sponge on patient's head. The patient was shivering. After 30 minutes, the temperature dropped, and the patient looked better. When the doctor arrived, the temperature was already down. The doctor said to us "well done, you are making a good staff nurse in the future." I felt grateful & happy and proud of myself. When I reflected back on this incident, I feel blessed in working as a nurse.

The above quotation implies that appraisal from a knower could construct self-confidence among the novice learners. PRSN has admitted that support from other members of the health team can maintain their confidence to perform better nursing care. Oldland et al. (2017) found out that students reported about their increased confidence acquired through reflection and improved in their clinical knowledge and problem solving and communication skills. However, there is often a time that the student nurses would not receive positive support from other members of the health team. Unlike the above situation, another participant reported her disappointment in the job and other staff nurse's reactions towards her. Siti wrote in her (RJ1)

> When a patient, who refused to stay in bed and didn't seek assistance when he was going out of bed, had fallen and had his head knocked to the wall. Staff nurse and I helped him to go to his bed. I had applied pressure dressing before the doctor came and ordered X-ray. Hopefully, no internal injury was detected. I was afraid maybe they would question me about my duty toward my patient. I should be more concern and assess the patient's general health condition.

This excerpt signifies that reflection is a journey to inner-self. During clinical practice, this participant was not content about her practice and demonstrated a sense of low self-confidence in her practice. Similarly, another participant reported her awareness of her practice in her report. Anna quoted in her (RJ1):

> When I failed to calculate the drops correctly and the drip finished fast, I knew this is my mistake. I felt guilty and immediately took action to prevent further medical complications to the patient. So, I checked O2 saturation, the patient's breathing rate, and any other discomfort that the patient may experience due to hypervolemia [increase fluid in body]. When, I reported to the staff nurse, and observed what she was going to do, I reflected back on my mistake and learned from it for my future professional life. The great lesson I learned from this real-life event was that I should never hide my mistake, accept it and learn from it.

In the above excerpt, making mistakes was demonstrated as an opportunity to increase knowledge and improve self-efficacy in one's professional life. In line with the above, Banner (1984) believed that the students learn from their mistakes through self-development and engaged in self-reflection and self-evaluation by recognizing the sources of knowledge. The observation reported by other participants indicated that some particular experience had contributed to her awareness of the authenticity of the purpose in what had occurred. Yun reported in her (RJ3):

> When my patient's mother asked me for the patient case note (PCN) and she was screaming in the ward and wanted something against hospital policy, I became alert about the situation. I knew my position as a Student Nurse; so, I didn't interfere, I wanted to see what staff nurse would react toward the patient's relative. I saw the staff nurse was using a very soft voice to talk and explain the situation and the reasons for her refusal to not giving the (PCN) to her. I controlled my emotions and asked her the right questions at the right time. I knew that as a mother she wanted to protect her child. I learned that in future, I will give good explanations to the patient and family.

In the above quotation, the participant revealed her awareness from a different angle; from her position to the patient's mother and how the staff nurse controlled herself. All together her awareness helped her to handle similar situation in the future. Lena, another participant, reported an event that challenged her self-efficacy. She wrote in her (RJ1):

> Patient with an open fracture, hard of hearing, and the language barrier didn't allow me [student nurse] to apply s/c injection of pain killer. When I reported to the staff nurse, she talked to her and asked me to perform the injection in front of her. I did administer the injection without any problem and the patient had no complaint. I was aware of the reason for the patient's refusal and reflecting and analyzing how the staff nurse solved the problem that both sides were happy. This incident enabled me to assess my self-efficacy. I realized about my lack of competence and confidence to persuade the patient. I was aware that it is the patient's right to choose her nurse, but I was a Student Nurse who needs to learn the nursing practice in a situation. This event reminded me that I need to learn many things academically and emotionally.

In this excerpt, the participant had emphasized on the challenging situation that targeted her confidence. However, through her awareness, she got the opportunity to improve and learn from the staff nurse which improved her sense of self-efficacy. Likewise, Paterson and Chapman (2013) highlighted that the nature of knowledge acquisition from experience is required to develop skills of critical reflection to advance in higher levels of understanding and awareness. Self-awareness among PRSN should appear in a form of self-efficacy, self-confidence, or self-expression representing self-analysis that participants quoted in their weekly journals. It was noticed that the sense of awareness, explicitly and implicitly, towards 'self' as a student nurse was an objective to engage PRSN in a process of realization of 'self' as a nurse in the future. As PRSN experienced self-analysis, they gained an opportunity to form professional identity for themselves as nurses.

6.2.2.3 Forming Professional Identity

The previous sections, the discussion was about findings from the reflective journals written about the ability to integrate the theory and practice and self-awareness. This section will explore the concept of forming professional identity according to the statements from the reflective journals. This major theme emerged from the content analysis at the practical process level of reflection indicating that the novice student nurses demonstrating awareness on their professional role in the future. In this regard, Parks (2000) asserted that through the process of writing, the student nurses would embrace what nursing practice is appropriate for a particular medical situation and similarly they acquire and communicate the disciplinary knowledge required from them. The participants stated in their RJ about the incidences that facilitate this process and the role of other members of the health team in constructing their professional identity. In their RJ, they stated that they

developed awareness towards those unique incidences that exclaimed their roles in the field of nursing. In other words, they implicitly and explicitly explained that they were in the process of constructing their professional identity. Lena explicitly viewed herself as a member of the nursing community in her (RJ5):

> In the future, I will aim to develop my assertive skills when working with colleagues. I will work out strategies for how I can achieve this in order to be an excellent staff nurse in the future.

The above quotation implies that reflecting on the present situation denotes that an authentic purpose of building her identity and improving her knowledge and skills in the process of professional development. In support of the above, Epstein (1999) asserted that the development of the individuals' professional identity integrated with the individuals' beliefs, attitudes and values, and the professional culture. In another except, she implicitly quoted in her (RJ7):

> In future, in order to maintain patient's health, performing the procedure without causing pain, I must learn to plan proper nursing intervention. As a medical staff, I must make sure to fulfil the patient's needs on his suitable condition.

This excerpt reveals that through reflection, PRSN gained an opportunity to understand themselves as a novice student nurse and to plan for their future role.

Plan for the future. While writing their journals, they reflect on their actions, on their nursing practice, on any incidence of the real-life event, should it be the nursing care or the communication with other staff nurses. This type of reflection causes more awareness; an inner-reflection from the surrounding that is encouraging. Tarrant (2013) asserted that the learners need to turn these reflections into action; some actions, simple or complicated, which can be a planning for personal development. This personal development and decision making for future carrier can

form their identity as a student nurse at the present or a staff nurse in the future. In their RJ, they explicitly stated that either upon reflection on other's behavior in clinical posting or on their inner-self, they make decisions on what type of staff nurse they would like to be in the future. One participant explicitly reported her plan for the future upon reflection on the clinical situation. Safura stated in her (RJ5):

> In the future, I will handle the situation more perfectly and faster; in the future, my plan is to perform with confidence, calm heart, and mind. I must build my confidence to take care of my patients. In the future, I should not be afraid or ignore the patient, I should use a smooth and soft voice when talking to a client; moreover, I will use my knowledge and help my patient in her condition.

The above fragment implies that reflection helped the novice student nurses to decide on the quality of a nurse she wants to be in the future. This student nurse's determination of being a member of a healthcare community is positive and indicated how she wanted to initiate from the reflection on others and the learning that has taken place in practicum. In support of the above statement, McAllister (2012) asserted that effective reflection helps the nurses carefully plan their actions and consciously control it to ensure it is beneficial to their patient. Similarly, another participant, Yun, explicitly declared in her (RJ1): 'I want to do my best as a staff nurse or even better. I should aim higher.' This participant focused on her weakness, when she reflected on it, learned from it, and decided to improve herself in the future. In another journal, she demonstrated her reflection upon a staff nurse and explicitly told her friends accordingly. Yun wrote in her (RJ3):

> …… some staff nurses' behavior gives me the idea that I don't want to be like them when I become a member of the health group. I even tell my friends not to be like them.

This excerpt implies that other members can contribute to the participants' choice of preferences. By reflecting on other's behavior, they take any opportunity to learn from the staff nurses; however, they may follow their own mind-set.

Competency. The concept of competency, here, refers to the learners' ability to making sound decisions and be able to solve a problem independently. In this regard, Schon (1987) challenged the educators in the journey of competency that educators should make the learners ready for high capacity of knowledge and competence in practice setting by encouraging effective reflection. The notion of being competent is vital for the novice student nurses to find their place in the community of practice. However, there are some slight difference between competency and performing the task right; the differences are discussed in the reflective journals. During clinical posting, the student nurses have come to the level of understanding that having knowledge and implementing it are considered two different entities. That is, initiation in doing a nursing task must be considered carefully. Fatin reported an incident in her (RJ2):

> When I was giving a sponge bath to a patient upon her request, who had undergone fracture surgery and had traction, the staff nurse scolded me in front of the patient what I am doing and why I am giving a sponge bath. I explained it was the patient's request because she felt itchy and discomfort. The patient had told me several times that I make a good nurse in the future. It is my responsibility to attend to the patient's need. I think it is wrong not to attend to patient when she is complaining because the time is not right; I did it because I had time. I think if I didn't attend the patient's complaint I would not be a good nurse in the future.

By reflecting on the patient and the staff nurse, the student nurses can see the differences in the type of role they are going to play. In the above fragment, forming a professional identity was expressed in relation to how well the participant could do

the job well. Lestander et al., (2016) found out that the student nurses believe that reflection on practice can contribute to workplace competence and patient safety. Although it was a disappointing incident, the reflection on it could lead to their competency in the workplace. Thus, it can be said that reaching the level of competency could be represented differently among novice student nurses. Nouri reported about her personal transformation in her (RJ1 & RJ3):

> I need to be open-minded in receiving any advice. I need to prepare myself physically and mentally before starting my career as a nurse. I need to control my feeling of anger that is affecting my job. I should be a good student nurse and show that I can be an excellent staff nurse one day. I should be more alert and careful. I must be mentally and physically prepared before going to clinical posting. I need to improve my knowledge and skill to handle the medical situation fast and effectively. If a patient has difficulty in communicating; I need to communicate with my patient through sign language. I want to be a skillful nurse.

The above excerpt implies that the proper knowledge and skills are required for the student nurses to 'be a good nurse and skillful as well'. Upon the reflection in the practicum, the student nurses realized to be a member of the health team requires a lot of efforts. This student explicitly exclaimed that taking action and giving nursing care out of habit and routine would not be sufficient enough to reach the level of proficiency they desired for in their career. The danger of taking actions out of habitualisation was explained by McAllister (2012) as the primary impact of habitual act is the risk of dehumanizing patients and their needs. Likewise, other participant reflected on her knowledge, Anna wrote in her (RJ4):

> I really want to be a good nurse in the future and giving the best care and treatment to the patients. In the future, I will check patient's condition and diagnosis in order not to make fault judgment about them. And I make sure other health care worker not to make the same mistake. I want to be a good, dedicated and understanding nurse in the future.

This quotation indicates that the participant who wished to be 'a good nurse' also needs to increase her knowledge about nursing and related subjects. Similarly, Ayesha reported about the criteria of health care worker in her (RJ3):

> I think we need to widen our knowledge and learn more valuable information to apply in practicum. I think being supportive, knowledgeable and cooperative are the criteria every health care worker should have.

The above quotation indicates that the reflection in clinical posting offers this participant the idea of the knowledge that every member of the health care provider team should acquire before starting to work in the clinical settings. In other words, the participant stated the importance of knowledge and valuable information that helps student nurses reach competency. (Boud et al., (1985a) believed that the purpose of reflection is involving the learners in their experience and their previous knowledge, which guides them to new perspectives in life. Thus, reflection can be the main vehicle of competence in education and knowledge in the process of learning. So, reflection can be a means to reach professional development.

Effective communication. Having an ability to communicate effectively means a competent nurse is able to plan for the future. This ability is considered very important in forming their professional identity. Oldland et al., (2017) asserted that increased confidence acquired through reflection and improved clinical knowledge and ability in problem solving and communication skills are professional workplace behaviors in clinical environments. Similarly, another participant wrote about the significance of proper communication in the process of gaining professional identity. She believed that effective communication is 'a' must be acquired ability for every novice student nurse and other members of the health team in order to be efficient in giving medical care. In this regard, Siti stated in her (RJ 5):

If I were a staff nurse, I would appreciate the importance of good communication, being compassionate and acquire basic nursing skills. Nurses have an important role in supporting patient's relatives at the time of their loss, emotionally, psychologically and show a caring perspective. Effective communication and listening skills are the key to do effective care for nurses to support families through their loss. As a staff nurse in future, I have to sharpen my communication skills. Working with different patients, I need to educate myself to understand my patients better. In order to provide proficient care in future, I should keep myself aware of the policies & procedures about nursing care in any clinical setting.

In the above quotation, it is implied that professional identity would be formed through effective communication with patients; and to understand the patients in order to give them proper treatment and nursing care. In this regard, the caregiver must be familiar with the devices to make this communication as smooth as possible. In accordance with the above fragment, Oldland et al. (2017) maintained that the ability to develop better communication styles, enhance listening skills, re-shape the learning style would increase confidence that, in turn, lead to the development of clinical and professional characteristic of high-quality nursing practice. On the other hand, one participant simply claimed that 'I can't do many things [in hospital posting] because I am still a student nurse' (Siti, RJ7). This statement indicates that student nurses were aware of their level of knowledge that affected their identity. That is, she required more time and more preparation to reach the competency. In other words, it was well emphasized that she could not be left alone in her devices at work-place unsupervised with her level of knowledge. In the same vein, Anna put forward the roles that other individuals play in the journey of constructing professional identity. She wrote in her (RJ7):

…..this event made me realize that I am dealing with people. And every action can affect someone's life and I need to be extra careful in the future. I take this event as a guideline in my life as a student nurse and in my journey to be a good nurse in the future. We need to change for the future. As a health care

provider, we need to work as a team and understand each other's function in the team. We just need to change our attitude to be more open and more willing to share something with other members of the team. We need to communicate with each other more professionally.

In the process of forming professional identity, however, the above quotation implies that the roles other people play were impactful on forming the novice student nurses' professional identity should it be individually or in a team. Oldland et al. (2017) called it team base-learning that helps the learners to develop better communication styles. In fact, it was clearly emphasized the influence of significant others in the process of forming a professional identity. Similarly, Fatin wrote about the role of another professional body in her (RJ3):

> …..I remember this event because the staff nurse takes it simple. When I asked for gloves for my protection, she refused to tell me where I can get them. I realize that I cannot be like that staff nurse for future. If I want to perform another injection, I will find disposable gloves first. I don't want to put myself at high risk when working with the patient's blood without any precaution measures and protective devices. I need to take care of myself in order to provide good nursing care to others.

This quotation indicates that a simple conversation between a staff nurse and a student nurse has a strong impact on her future carrier. The student nurse's concern about her health was not a personal issue in this regard; she nicely put forwards her prospect for her future identity. A similar consideration about the role of others was reflected in PRSN's journals about their nurse tutors. As far as effective communication with their tutors concerned, the participants indicated that they hardly approach them. Among the inhibitions to effective communication, however, the PRSN frankly expressed their true feelings and attitudes of "distrust" and "fear" towards their tutors and staff nurses. They pointed out that after their tutors had given them the instructions before engaging in practicum, they rarely came to the clinical

arena. In the same vein, Mahlanze and Sibiya (2017) asserted that to nurture open communication through reflective journal writing, the nurse tutors must take serious actions to listen to student nurses' voices to nurture open communication. However, the roles of academic individuals, like their tutors, and their presences were scarcely highlighted in the journals. Nevertheless, few participants provided their views on their nurse tutors in their reflective journals. With the help of the guideline, this participant composed one of her entire journals to talk about an incident that influenced her mind; which involved their tutor and her classmate. Nouri reported in her (RJ 6):

> ……one of our friends reported about other student nurse who had administered the wrong dose of antibiotics in one of her Reflective Journal (RJ). Shortly after submitting it, the tutor asked her to explain and tell her the whole story. My friend had chosen that incident for the moral value of the incident. Answering all the tutor's questions, she had to prove that it wasn't her who administered the wrong dose of medication. My friend's story was told to other tutors and the words passed around without her consent. I am disappointed with my tutor. We were told to write something in our journal that demonstrates our improvement. But this incident didn't show confidentiality from our tutor's side. Although we tried to calm our friend down, we all had decided to write about good/positive events to prevent being scolded. From this incident, I have learned two things; one I would write about the incident as much as my tutor wants to hear, and I would write something in my RJ to avoid misunderstanding. Moreover, as a nurse teacher, in the future, I would keep my students' secrets.

The above excerpt implies that one simple reaction of the tutor could have a significant impact on student nurses' life. With all respect that the student nurses expressed for that particular nurse tutor, she has decided to be different in the future. In support of the above, Chirema (2007) stated the reasons for the learners' inability to reflect are the lack of trust and support from the teacher necessary for learning to occur. Moreover, the tutors' reaction toward the some RJ was so outstanding that not only they changed the flow of the reflective journal writing among PRSN in general,

it had impacts on the student nurses' identity and their opinions on a nurse tutor. According to Braine (2009), nurses hope to be reflective practitioners; so, they engage in reflective practices to reach the level of competency which is considered to have many attributes of reflective practices such as problem-solving skills and critical thinking

In summary to the above discussion on the practical process level of reflection revealed the practical level of process reflection. The fragments from the reflective journals demonstrated the participants' experiences of integrating the theory and practice in practicum, the impact of journal writing in the process of self-awareness and forming their professional identity. These fragments explored that no clear line between the levels of reflection and they freely travel back and forth to convey their ideas. The discussion above was summarized in Figure 6.3.
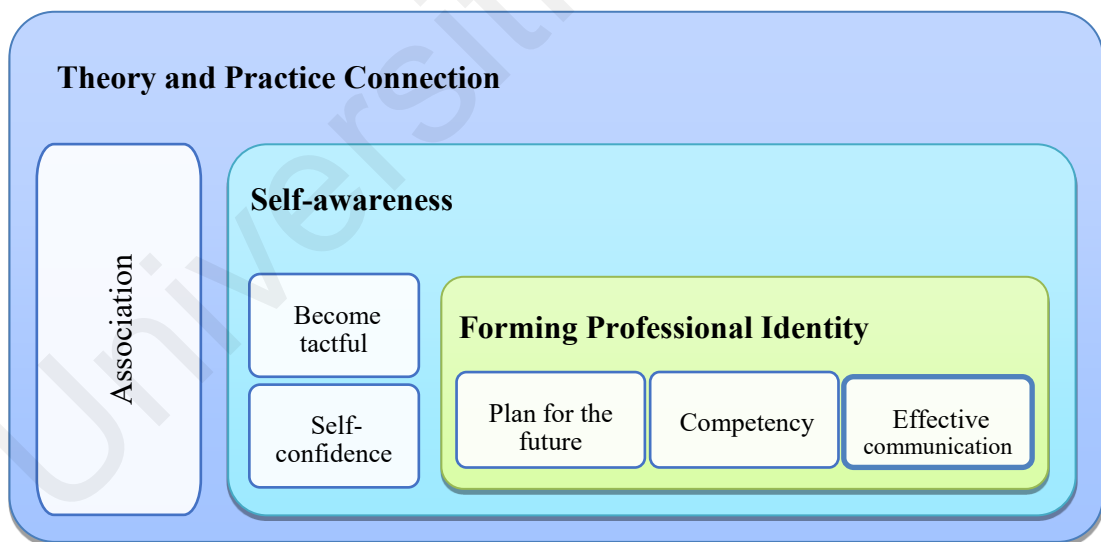

Figure 6.3. Summary of process level of reflection revealed in reflective journals

6.2.3 Critical Premise Level of Reflection

In the light of the concept of critical premise level of reflection, this section attempts to analyze the ways Pre-Registered Student Nurses (PRSN) demonstrated their critical reflection in their Reflective Journal Writing (RJW). Two previous sections discussed two other levels of reflection; the former was the discussion of descriptive content level of reflection, as appeared in scripts of RJW. At the content level, the reflection was on the description of the surrounding, the place where reflection has occurred upon those who played different roles in that environment. The environment refers to the arena of clinical posting where the participants were performing their nursing tasks on assigned patients. The later section, the discussion focused on the participants' reflection upon how they were enacting their nursing tasks. At the process level of reflection, the participants quoted about the impact of practical aspects of their knowledge and experiences implemented in the clinical posting. As written in their RJW, they emphasized on how nursing practice had impacts on the process of their professional knowledge and skills.

Through the entailed content analysis, attention was paid to understand how pre-registered student nurses reflected on their concerns, dilemmas, and thoughts within the context of reflective journals. Cranton (2006) maintained that premise reflection occurs when the learners questions the problem itself. It is the critical reflector who has achieved the highest levels of reflection by being able to continually reflect upon their experience and skills to reach the stage that enables the individual to solve the problem and make decisions and make learning part of his or her own (Jasper, 1999; Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1991). Moreover, Mezirow (1991) asserted that at the level of premise reflection, learners inquire about the rationale of a nursing task. At this level, learners with their practical

knowledge viewed the purpose of those particular nursing tasks and try to understand how these nursing activities are fit together. At this level, learning has occurs because it was assisted by higher-order thinking. The analyses of journals at the critical level of reflection revealed that PRSN's unit of thoughts were categorized into the following subcategories namely, 1) being judgmental, 2) developing competence. The following section, each of these subcategories was discussed in detail.

6.2.3.1 Being Judgmental

Reflective journaling is believed to be an educational practice that motivated learners to criticize their practice. In stage five and six of their guideline for writing reflective journals, the participants are encouraged to state their opinions and reflect on the quality of work they have performed during their clinical posting. In other words, being judgemental is strongly encouraged in their guided reflective journals. The purpose is to draw their attention to their nursing practices to improve their performance in similar incidences in the future. In refer to Tanner's (2006) Clinical Judgment Model as a guide-for reflection, it signifies that the enactment of clinical judgments are influenced by what the novice student nurses bring to the clinical situations; their awareness of their knowledge and experience. The student nurses should be aware of how their tacit knowledge and previous experiences would affect their thinking about a patient's situation and their performance in caring for the patients as novice student nurses. In other words, their ability to be critical of their knowledge and experience can be of values in their nursing practice.

Being critical. The thorough analysis of the reflective journals revealed that participants demonstrated their sense of criticality on different aspects of their knowledge, and their performance of different types of nursing care. In support of

this discussion, Mezirow (1991) asserts that critical reflection causes awareness within the individuals about the assumptions that constrain the way they perceive, understand, and feel about the world. Then, the changes occur in the learners' perspectives that make the learners act upon the new understanding of themselves, the people, and the world around them, which transforms the learners' epistemic, sociolinguistic, and psychological states and make them new persons. Thus, this attitude of being judgmental was elaborately expressed towards self and other members of the health team in their journaling. For instance, Siti reflected on her self-criticism of being deficiency towards her patient. She reported in her (RJ5):

> ….. When I remembered that I left my patient having a blood transfusion and complained of discomfort in her arm, I felt very guilty. I should have listened to her and take immediate action by informing staff nurse. I should have stopped the flow immediately to avoid a swollen hand.

The above quotation revealed that she reflected on her wrongdoing and criticized herself for her shortfall and lack of attention. Due to being judgmental towards self, the student nurse could learn and never forget the incident. It can also be implied that in her opinion, failing on communication could lead to failure in cooperative nursing care that caused discomfort for the patient. The concept of cooperativeness was a valuable capacity of a novice student nurse that demonstrates her being a reflector learner. Effective reflecting on the action and learning from it was the incident another student nurse, Anna, had reported. She wrote in her (RJ5):

> ….while I was taking the BP machine out of his room, it sounded and made the patient wake up. His wife complained to me and asked me if her husband's disease is serious. I was speechless and couldn't apologize accurately. After this incident, the patient that was cheerful was quiet and unhappy. I will not repeat this foolish mistake because I hurt my patient's feeling. I felt regretful of pulling the PB machine out of the room. Since then, thinking before taking action becomes my habit. I must think of a good rationale for my action, and then I should explain to him about my action.

The above fragment implied that a simple act of taking a BP machine from one place to another place requires full attention. In other words, it is revealed that reflecting on the task makes her think of a rationale for her action. The participant's self-reflection of her performance would improve her as being a better nurse in the future. In the view, Mezirow (1981), states that reflective writing can facilitate the autonomy in learners when they take responsibility for their learning and gradually are capable of achieving lifelong learning. Thus, a liberated learner is a self-directed learner that has engaged in critical reflection and can provide a rationale for his or her performance.

Having a rationale. Having a rationale for anything you do was a positive sign of learners to be accountable. In fact, many educationalists consider critical reflection or critical reasoning as a fundamental goal of learning in higher education (Schon, 1984; Dewey, 1933; Mezirow (1991); Cranton, 1996; Merriam, 2004). Siti wrote about an incident that evaluated her critical judgment on making a decision. She reported in her (RJ7):

> When a patient complained about severe pain and asked for a pain killer, the staff nurse asked me about pain. How I knew about pain. How I can assess the patient's pain in order to give a pain-killer. Then, I told the patient that he needs to be visited by the doctor for the reassessment of his pain, to my surprise he seemed to calm down a little. I learned I need to check the drug [pain-killers] chart and not overwhelmed by self-pity. I am able to gain knowledge and skills for safe and effective practice. I know I must consult and take advice from colleague when appropriate.

This quotation indicates that in order to act professionally, the student nurse must be self-critical and self-judgmental towards the situation according to the nursing task in hand. Since, she could not provide any rationale for her enactment;

thus, she simply didn't give a pain killer. She reflected on her knowledge about the pain that was insufficient; so, she sought professional help to increase her understanding of the patient's condition and prevent future complications. This way she could provide scientific nursing care that is far from routine work. Another participant reported the incident that caused her to be attentive and judgmental for the sake of the patient's health. Lena reports in her (RJ2 & 5):

> …when I saw that doctor touched my patient's wound before changing his gloves; I become alert for my patient's wellbeing. But I was not brave enough to tell the doctor or stop him from checking the wound. I was surprised to see that he didn't even use the disinfectant liquid. I felt guilty through the doctor visiting. On another similar occasion, I noticed that the doctor visit a patient with open wound without washing his hand and he even had a long sleeves coat on. I was alarmed but conscious enough not to say anything to embarrass the doctor in front of the patient. However, we told him, he responded positively.

This fragment was used in another section of this study for the challenges the participant experience in giving the nursing care in clinical posting. However, it is used here also to demonstrate how a student nurse became judgmental towards self as well as another member of the health group; and her criticism comprised self and a professional body. In this regard, (Mezirow, 1997) maintained that a self-sufficient learner is empowered, productive and responsible one. This type of learners acts critically upon received ideas and show judgments towards others. Similarly, another participant reported her critical opinion about the staff nurse' behavior of as she put it as 'irresponsible and rude'. Yun wrote in her (RJ3):

> When the doctor announced that the patient had passed away, my friend and I helped her to take care of the body. Afterward, the staff nurse started scolding us and showed some disrespectful action towards the patient's family and relatives. As it was my first time seeing such behavior from a staff nurse, I felt sad and disappointed and I wondered why she is doing what she is doing. I think her behavior was rude and very irresponsible and not professional at all.

The above quotation indicates that when the student nurse observes behavior from a staff nurse and considers it as inappropriate, she has reached a critical level. By stating this incident in her RJ, she was intending to find a rationale for the staff nurse's behavior. At this level, learning has reached a higher level which very unlikely to be forgotten. Reflection provides an excellent way for student nurses to evaluate their level of knowledge and develop their ability to make clinical judgments. So, we can conclude that reflection is in the heart of reasoning and clinical judgment. Ability to practice at this level indicates that the learner has developed the level of competency.

6.2.3.2 Developing Competence

As a general rule, the clinical posting is provided for the pre-registered student nurses to expand their learning repertoire. Thus, reflective journaling was introduced to retain this learning, with which they can develop competency in giving nursing care. For instance, Chapman and Greenberg (2009) emphasized that effective reflection can engage individual learners in their personal growth and to encourage them to develop more competence to evaluate workplace skills. In support of reflection for competence development, Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014) asserted that reflection has a strong connection between the practical element and the theoretical one in workplaces. They believed that effective reflection can allow for deep learning to occur in the practicums. Therefore, student nurses must avoid inadequacy through reflection and reflective journaling.

Avoid inadequacy. In their reflective journals, the student nurses highlighted what they had discovered about their shortfalls in their reflective journals. According to them, the shortfalls were identified as deficiency of knowledge and skills in

nursing practice that they need to avoid in all accounts. Therefore, the attitude of being self-critical could help them to develop adequate knowledge in the process of professionalism. For instance, Fatin reported about her learning needs in her (RJ1):

> When I was assigned to take care of a patient under a ventilation machine, I was shocked and I didn't know how to handle this case. The patient had all kinds of tubes and I was responsible to assess the patient's general condition regularly. I was happy the staff nurse was very helpful. However, I realized I need to know a lot about the patients under ventilation machine.

This excerpt reveals that she realized the insufficiency of her knowledge in the workplace through clinical practice. Park (2000) pointed out that through the process of writing, the student nurses would adopt what works better and adapt accordingly in a particular hospital setting and similarly acquire the disciplinary knowledge required from them. Similarly, another participant reported her concerns of her inadequacy in her journal. Nouri wrote in her (RJ3):

> It was a morning shift; the doctor was making round visiting patients when the patient diagnosed with hypoglycaemia was collapsed in front of him. Staff nurses acted calmly and quickly. As student nurses, we couldn't do much except observe and provide simple care. It was an unpredictable event, very confusing; how a patient who could talk and walk and interact; all of a sudden collapse. I couldn't understand why that happened. I need to know about the complications of diseases. I need to learn more.

According to the above quotation, it was disclosed that the participant declared that she could do only the simple task of nursing care for a patient in a critical condition. But to be able to involve more professionally with the patient, she is required to study more. She exclaimed about confusion as well. She realized that the confusion was caused due to lack of having related knowledge and skills. In line with the above statement, McCready (2007) maintained that the reflective journal can be evidence of the high quality of care and professional competence in practice

among learners. Student Nurses must keep in their mind that developing competence requires attending to their strength and weakness of their practice. Another participant indicated about her competence through reflective journaling. Safura reported about an incident that could help her patient through effective reflection upon her experience. She wrote in her (RJ5):

> When I was taking a report from the doctor for my patient, her son called that his mother has shortness of breath. I attended to patient, changed her position, and applied O2. Patient was restless and weak. Shortly after these interventions, she got back to normal. I had a similar experience with a patient before. I realized that I am not nervous, and I could handle the patient gently. I knew if I wasn't fast to take action, I might have faced complications.

This quotation implies that through reflection upon her experience, the student nurse could help her patient to feel normal again. She had enough confidence in herself to take action before professional help arrived, and she was competent enough to ask for help or wait for the doctor's order. It is clear that through premise reflection, learners can develop competency in themselves. In line with this idea, Bandura (1986) maintained that learners appropriately adjust their thoughts and behaviors as the result of self-reflection on identifying positive as well as negative aspects of their practice. Reflection at this level is viewed to improving professional competence; a self-directed learning that is long-lasting and has a root in reflection. In this regard, reflecting on her wrong doing made the participant more adequate in her nursing practice. Anna wrote in her (RJ6):

> I knew the only one who should administer Morphine is the registered staff nurse, but I accepted to help her due to her busy schedule. I was scolded by the Sister of the ward. It was wrong of me doing something I shouldn't do. I would not do anything to put the patient's life in danger. I know as a student nurse, I shouldn't handle this type of injection.

The above excerpt reveals that even scolding from a Superior can be helpful in the process of learning and reaching the level of competency. By stating her mistake in her RJ, she admitted that the importance of the behavioral competency concerning other members of the health team in the workplace practice. Being critical towards herself helped the learners to avoid making the same mistakes when they would encounter similar circumstances in the future. Making mistakes and reflecting on them is a part of the process of self-discovery and the capacities of reaching competency. The content analysis of the reflective journals comes to the end with this discussion. The summary of the above discussion was illustrated in Figure 6. 4.
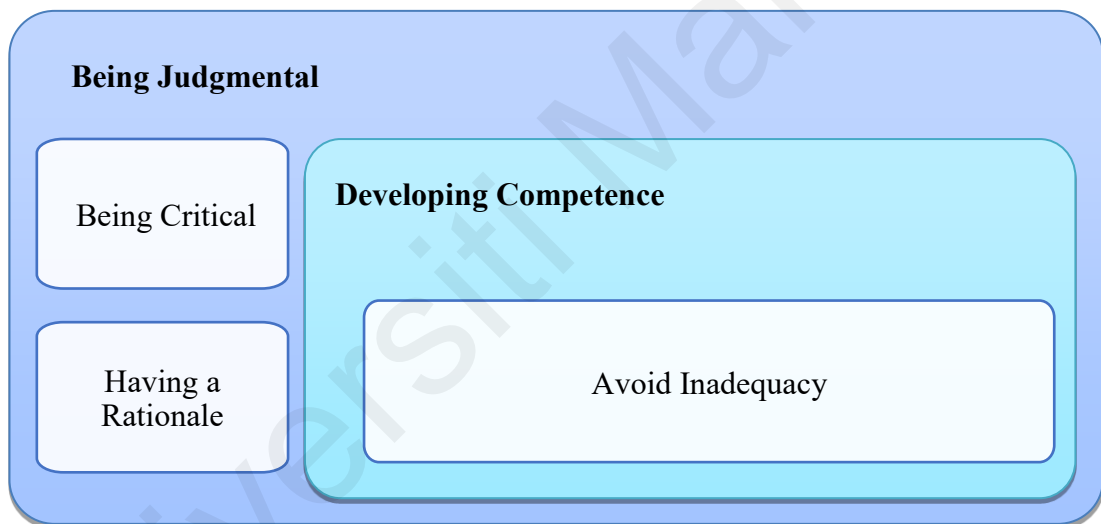

Figure 6.4. Summary of premise level of reflection revealed in reflective
          journals

6.3 Summary of Discussion for the Third Research Question

The above discussion explored the findings through an indebt content analysis of the guided reflective journals to answer the third research question. The PRSN revealed three main levels of reflection as specified by Mezirow (1991). He named these components of content, process, and premise levels of reflection as an individual can cognitively understand the experience better if they critically question the content,

process, and premise reflection underlying the experience. By doing so, the learners experience higher-order conscious thought that would manifest in the change in behavior and the underlying values, attitudes, and beliefs. This can assist them to go forward, to reach the level of personal and professional growth.

Moreover, reflective journals as a personal record of educational experiences and lessons learned during the experience in practicum, the learners focus their attention on what they have been able to accomplish and how much knowledge they have attained. Additionally, the findings maintained that these major themes are not bounded discretely whereas they are interrelated. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the learners unconsciously travel reciprocally to different levels of reflection. By doing this, they purposefully stimulate their thinking about his or her theoretical and clinical concepts to reach lifelong learning. Figure 6.5 illustrates the summary of this section on the levels of reflection revealed in reflective journal entries.
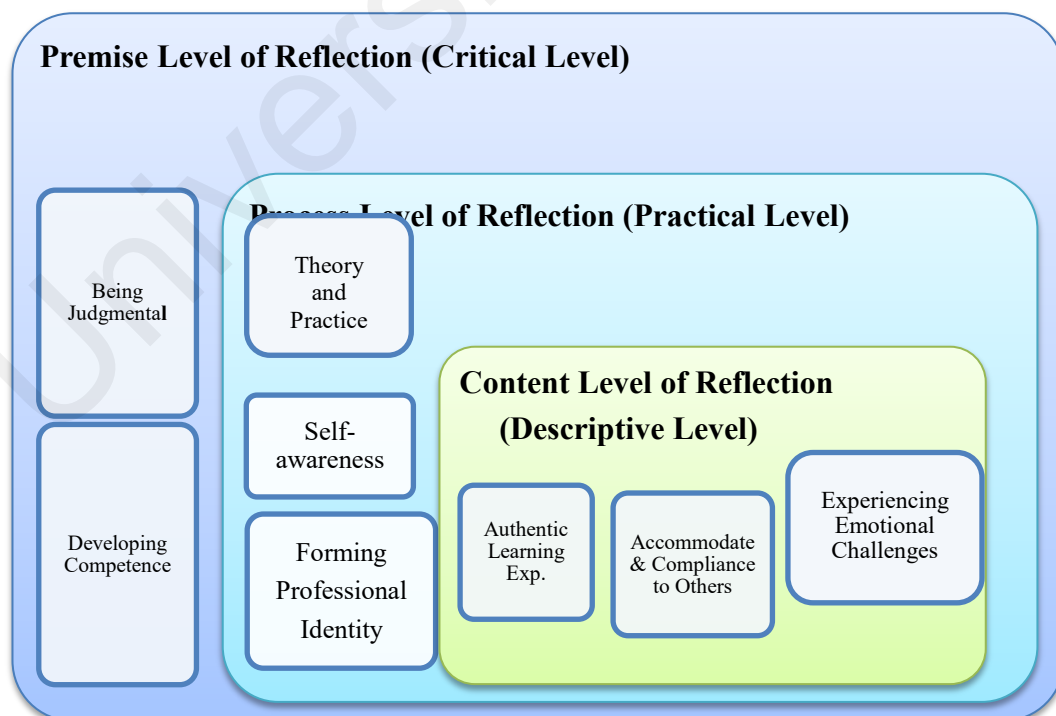

Figure 6.5. Summary of discussion for the third research question

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to report the conclusions and make implications on the key findings in the light of quantitative data collection and analysis of the first research question. Moreover, under an exploratory qualitative data collection and analysis answers were obtained and discussed for the second and the third research questions. Based on the thematic analysis of the data, interpretations and related discussions on the theoretical background directing the study shaped the main constituents of this chapter.

7.2 Conclusions

In the heart of key findings of the PRSN' perceptions of RJW, their evaluation of reflective journaling through interviews, and their disclosure of the levels of reflection in their reflective journals (RJ), the following conclusions were organized. In other words, new dimensions of concepts have emerged through different sources of data with a similar trait from various intra-case and inter-case analyses of the IPA matrix, the transcribed verbatim, and the document analysis of the RJ entries. These aspects of major findings were classified into four categories, namely 1) knowledge improvement, 2) collaboration and guidance, 3) self-awareness and building professional identity, 4) challenges in the context of reflection.

7.2.1 Reflective Journaling and Improvement of Knowledge

The findings revealed that reflective journaling plays important roles in the process of improving knowledge and skills among PRSN. This improvement was acknowledged in the results obtained from multiple sources including survey on perception, interviews and RJW. The literature of reflective journaling has documented that the main role of reflective journals is to improve the learners' content knowledge (e.g. Schon, 1984; Chirema, 2007; Mann et al 2009; Moon 2009). This content knowledge could be built upon a professional and yet individual way to build connections within theory and practice that appeared in RJW. The levels of reflectivity among PRSN were evident in their nursing practice as reflected in the journals as well as in their interviews. In these sources of data, the participants demonstrated higher levels of reflection when they incorporated their classroom theoretical knowledge in their contextual performances as a justification for their decisions and judgements; that is, the students did respond using critical thinking and justifications for their actions and provided reasons for the actions taken from time to time.

In regards to Schon's idea, the activity of RJW is the application of 'reflection-on-action' to process the real-life events they had experienced as novice student nurses to promote their learning. Thus, they can gain a better understanding of their learning through reflection. It was acknowledged through RJ and interviews that RJW can empower them for their future profession either from recalling their experience to relate it to the current one or learning from their mistakes. Similarly, some studies suggested that reflective journaling encourages the process of self-efficacy and empowerment among learners (Mann et al., 2009; Mezirow, 2000; Bjerkvik & Hilli, 2019).

Likewise, it was stated that in the process of writing journals, the learning climate of clinical posting provided opportunities for novice student nurses, in many ways, to realize their weakness. The participants stated through this realization by RJ, they found out which area required more training and preparation; either the areas in nursing skills or areas in the English language such as words to express their ideas. These findings were aligned with the findings stated by Chirema (2007) and Epp (2008) emphasizing the idea that reflective activities can be widely used to facilitate learning in nursing education.

In their journals, initially, the participants described the physical situation of the workplace; they revealed that their ability to reflect at the content level of reflection is a purely descriptive level. Mezirow (1991) believed 'disorienting dilemma' is the very first phenomenon that novice student nurses experience in the process of learning. That is, the novice nurses come to a clinical posting with a set of fixed assumptions and expectations, or 'frames of reference' that make them more reflective and emotionally able to change. At this stage, what learners feel and perceive is the main concern that matches content reflection. At this level which they perceived clinical posting as an authentic learning condition, a situation that requires teamwork, and which they experience highly exciting and challenging situations. These findings indicated that the participants are reflecting upon the situation and in this process, the learning is developing.

Majority of PRSN were overwhelmed with describing the real-life situations; because the descriptions were too detailed, mainly enriched with medical jargons that represented their knowledge about the disease, treatment, patients and even the medical equipment and technologies. It could be argued that the PRSN would attend to their clinical posting equipped with knowledge that accumulated throughout the

classroom attendance, textbooks, and training in the simulation lab. Hence, they were not fully disoriented about the situations and hospital settings. The findings revealed that PRSN did incorporate their reflection in a limited perspective as they were considered exclusively novice student nurses. This limitation, however, was described as being non-reflector or reflector by some scholars (Mezirow, 2000; Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Chirema, 2007; Kear, 2013).

The more practical aspects of their training were when these student nurses come in the clinical posting with minimal or no amount of exposure to real-life practice. Since the participants are exposed to an authentic situation, hospital setting, they are ready for learning more realistically. In this regard, Tarrant (2013) pointed out that the availability of space and the opportunity to articulate their reflection is important for learners that could help them to take the next step. Their ideas and experiments could help them to develop their theory about their practice which enhances their future performance. Now that these novice student nurses were in an authentic situation of hospital wards, they realized that they needed to demonstrate their knowledge in the field of nursing. This level was coined by Mezirow (1991) as process level of reflection that is mainly concern with more practical aspects of their nursing practice in the clinical posting. The participants expressed the requirements, limitation and constraint they faced in the practicum. The findings about the practical level in this study have supported other studies that maintained the idea that clinical posting is the time that theory and practice come into connection (Schon, 1984; Mezirow, 1991).

However, the novice learners shortly adapted themselves and moved away from being 'unknown' to a 'known' person and became oriented in the situations of real-life events in clinical posting. The novice learners were experiencing a

reciprocal condition that shows their visiting to the initial stage and advanced one periodically to examine their knowledge throughout the time. That is, as the student nurses advanced in their knowledge, at the process or practical level, they make use of their prior experiences and practice in a more professional way. They can reflect in a more effective way to relate their tacit knowledge and connect it to the present situation of practice. As time goes by, participants gained more competence in their knowledge and practice with less psychological stress. The discussion above is demonstrated in Figure 7.1.

Content Reflection (WHAT)   **Process Reflection (HOW)**
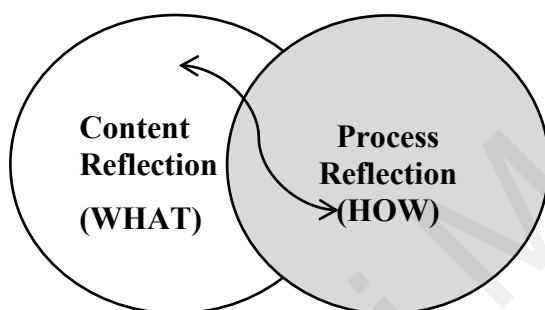
Figure 7.1. Content and process reflection overlapping

Furthermore, in the process of learning, participants challenged their knowledge with their practice in actual real-life situations. At this level, they demonstrated some signs of criticality as they reflect on their classroom theory, on the actual practice of their practice, and the practice of other members of the health care community. However, reflectivity was limited to a certain aspect during the process or the practical level of reflection. In this study, demonstration of poor or no attempt of critical reflection at this level was less obvious from the participants. That is, the scenarios were reflected on in their journals as they admitted they knew 'what is right when they observe wrong practice'. This statement showed that the attempt for criticality is not far away; yet they gave importance to the understanding of their

nursing practice and very much alert to incorporating their competence into nursing practice.

Schon (1984) maintains that the real reflection is the time when learners put into practice whatever they have conceptually learned. This idea was highlighted in the writings of the journals when the participants expressed their knowledge or lack of knowledge in that particular situation. Likewise, Chirema (2007, p. 193) maintained that the use of reflective journals is a "means of promoting reflection and learning in educational settings." As one of the participants wrote in one of her journal entries, "I think back, I check, and now I know as a nurse what to do in future" supported Mezirow's idea of perspective transformation. He stated that at the process level of reflection, learners are engaged in the strategies in the process of solving problems or making decisions on how to take effective action. These mental abilities demonstrate that learners have reached the level above being only descriptive. In the study conducted by Chirema (2007), she mentioned that learners can be classified as reflectors when they are experiencing this level of reflection.

Moreover, the journals provided by PRSN contained not only their observations upon their nursing practice and the practice of other members of the health care community, but also contained their comments on their reflective descriptions of the physical surrounding of the clinical posting.

The findings from RJ indicated that along with description at the level of content reflection, the student nurses showed the ability for true reflection from their knowledge that they were able to relate to the new situation. The participants provided a detailed description of the situation vastly highlighted with the effectiveness and efficiency of their tacit knowledge. They valued this knowledge

objectively as it helped them to be efficient in the nursing tasks they were performing. Therefore, it can be argued that their reflections at this level were juxtaposed of two forms of learning conditions. In other words, there was an overlapping of their process and premise levels of reflections that demonstrated the learning that occurred at the practical as well as at the critical level. The discussion of overlapping concepts of process and premise reflections was demonstrated in Figure 7.2.
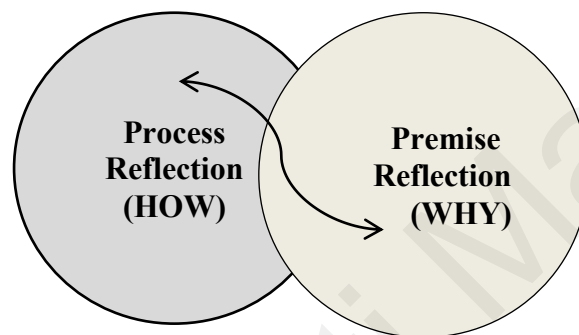
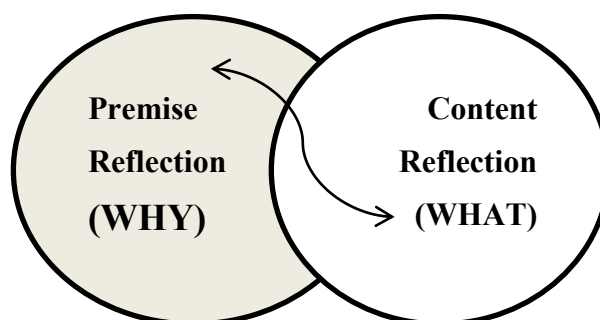*Figure 7.2.* Process and premise reflection overlapping

There were times that the participants examined and evaluated their performance but had difficulties in verifying appropriate actions. They, then, reflected on how to use their tacit knowledge through self-assessment. In their reflective journals, they declared that they learned from their mistakes through self-development and engaged in self- reflection and self-evaluation by recognizing the sources of knowledge. Consequently, over time, student nurses acknowledged that the process of reflective journaling made them feel responsible for their learning. At this stage, sharing and comparing experiences with other learners and through interaction with staff nurses, enhanced and more liberating learning has occurred.

This type of learning happened when learners were experiencing overlapping of the process or the practical level of reflection with the premise or the critical level of reflection. Moreover, the result is self-directed learning from the cyclical and yet overlapped of these levels of reflections.

At the critical level of premise reflection, the learners were more judgemental and critical toward self as well as others. That is, through critical reflection that appeared in the journals, it was revealed that the participants were judgemental toward self and criticizing their downfalls through analyzing the situation, that they would take immediate action if a similar situation arose. For instance, in one occasion a participant expressed her concerns when she realized that the doctor had not changed his surgical gloves and visited a patient with an open wound or when other participant became apprehended of medical malpractice by a doctor when he visited patients one after another without washing his hands. These situations demonstrated the ability of the participants in knowing the correct implementation of a medical task. It can be concluded that she examined her theoretical training analyzed her knowledge of medical negligence that could put the patients' lives in danger. Thus, she was experiencing the critical level of the premise reflection upon another person's medical practice. In this regard, Patton et al. (1997) proposed that writing about a significant clinical incident that stimulated their thinking is considered an action towards learning.

According to Mezirow (1990, 1991), critical reflection can assist the learners to recognize, analyze, and rationalize the values, assumption of others and themselves. With this ability, he maintained that learners having possessed a higher level of thinking can achieve lifelong learning. In the same vein, the learners had acquired knowledge and skills in their nursing practice through the on-going reflection on

themselves, their practices and respectfully ascertained other group members' practices. The above discussion was summarized in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3. Content and premise reflection overlapping

Taking Mezirow's (1991) idea of levels of reflection into consideration, it seems drawing a clear line between content or descriptive, process or practical and premise or critical levels of reflections is very challenging. In the category of levels of reflection stated by Mezirow (1991), knowledge attainment came as the 'by-product' of reflection that is improved and materialized through reflective journaling. He asserted that this acquired knowledge is the base of learning when the learners experience content, process and premise reflection. In this study, the fact is that the pre-registered student nurses' knowledge improvement was initiated at the level of content or descriptive level of reflection; however, it is very limited.

Furthermore, the analysis of journals at this level revealed the units of thought that were categorized into two subcategories namely, being judgmental and developing competence. The subtheme of being judgemental refers to the condition and situations that participants make judgments about themselves, others, and the nursing practice. They reported these judgments in their journals following the questions in the guideline.

Moreover, As Richardson & Maltby, (1995) maintain, journaling provides an opportunity to initiate self-directed learning and self-empowering for the participants in the process of their personalized learning. That is, along with being judgemental at the critical level, participants have revealed that through reflective journaling they have developed more competencies in giving nursing care. Reflective journals have proven to be the means with which the student nurses exclaimed their confusion and alertness, weaknesses and strength, as well as their ability to being critical thinkers. They expressed their appreciation for reflective journaling through their evaluation of being effective reflectors by demonstrating their ability in improving their knowledge and skills in workplace practice.

As the conceptual framework for this study was adapted from Transformative learning Theory by Mezirow (1991), three levels of content, process and premise reflection were not in a linear fashion that occur one after the other; but they emerged in a form of cyclical and they are overlapping each other in some areas. That is, no clear line can be drawn between these levels. Similarly, Chirema (2007, p. 199) stated that "the elements of the reflective process do not necessarily follow in a linear fashion." The linear fashion of these levels of reflection was declared by many scholars including Kear (2013). In her model, she pointed out that content reflection occurs before process reflection and then the critical level of premise reflection would take place.

Whereas in another study conducted by McCoach and Smith in 2016 with post-graduate health professional teachers, they introduced a model which according to them is cyclical. Their model focused on the exploration of 'world real problems' and 'technology-enriched' learning to provide meaningful learning methods. They designed their model by having an exploration of self for the first level; for the

second level, they included the insights of an examination of self into external factors (peers, and policy and procedures) concerning their practice; for the third level, they considered factors beyond the immediate system of health care. According to this model, they stated that levels of reflection are not always a linear; in fact, it is a cycle within itself and over time.

However, in this study these reflective levels were conceptualized in circles that are overlapping which they have a common segment in the center that represents learning. A type of lifelong learning that initiated from three levels of reflection which was considered emancipating for the learners. And the arrows are representing the fluid condition of these levels. That is the student nurses move back and forth in these levels to enhance their learning. The discussion above was summarized in Figure 7.4 and it is considered the reflective practice learning model.
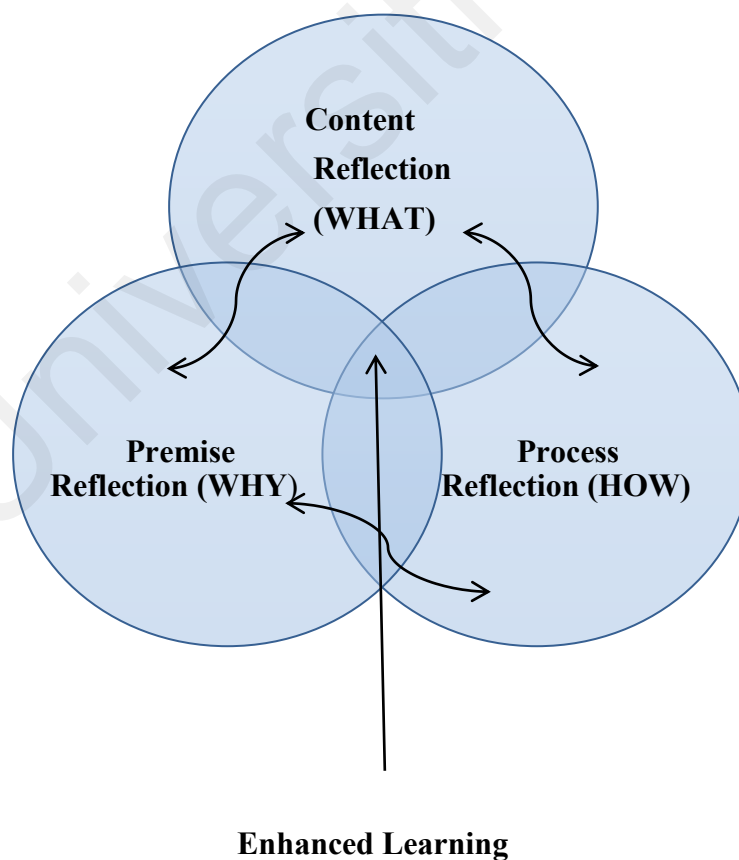

Enhanced Learning

Figure 7.4. Enhanced learning due to overlapping of the levels of reflection

7.2.2 Reflective Journaling Involves Collaboration and Mentoring

It is through reflecting on their levels of learning that the student nurses are encouraged to understand the complexity of reflective journaling. In the process of learning, the role of others is significant according to the participants. The findings indicate that almost all of the participants preferred collaborative learning activities. The supportive nature of the collaborative atmosphere was viewed conducive and pleasant. In this atmosphere, the interaction between novice student nurses was characterized as sharing ideas and reflecting upon experiences and exchange thoughts that conducive in the process of improving knowledge and skills whether it is writing reflective journal or nursing skills. The collaborative learning in reflective journaling implies an atmosphere of discussion and teamwork environment among the learners. Discussion in this situation, according to Nixon and McClay (2007, p.160), refers to "sowing seeds for transformative learning experience." They underlined that collaborative reflective practice provided positive excitement for professional growth among individual learners. The participants explicated that going to their friends is more common practice than going to their nurse tutor or staff nurses in case of difficulties. That is, discussion with friends is helpful before journal writing and reflecting on the real-life events.

Collaborative learning has been regarded as an important activity in the process of learning and development. Likewise, Bruner (1984) asserted that the view of mediation proposed by Vygotsky supports the idea of working with competent peers maximizes the learners' growth. That is, collaborative learning enhances effective reflection that causes lifelong learning. In fact, most participants stated that the role of individuals in their collaboratively oriented learning process was beyond a simple interaction between peers. They elaborated more on the collaborative learning with

focus on their tutors and staff nurses whom they were assigned to during hospital posting.

The collaborative context can enforce a knowledge-creating atmosphere. Being in clinical posting and being surrounded by others enabled participants to exchange more opinions and ideas that conducive for their learning. As commonly indicated by the participants, being exposed to observe nursing interventions being implemented by more knowledgeable ones in clinical posting was a learning condition as well as imposing the idea of wanting to be like them in future. These findings were in association with Mezirow's (2000, p.18) notions of transformative learning require the learners to be prepared to adopt another's point of view in case of facing any problem. He asserted that "transformative learning requires reframing in the sense that adult learners have to alter their frames of reference."

Likewise, some participants believed that RJW provoked effective reflection. That is, reflective journaling helped them to reach a higher level of learning and professionalism. One participates expressed her opinion on the collaborative atmosphere in her learning. She stated "I can always think about some knowledge that I learned from the staff nurse. I always think about what others did in a given incident, so I do the same". This finding supported that idea by Boud (1999), as he has commented that students can benefit from reflective practice upon acknowledging their needs and act accordingly. Wilson & Hayes (2000) indicated that the ability of self-reflection is a dimension of adult learning in the direction of the process of self-construction of knowledge that belongs to the learners. This idea was supported by other studies as well. Chirema (2007, p. 200), for example, maintained that journaling encourages student nurses to self-disclosure; disclosing sensitive issues that "foster a relationship of mutual trust that facilitates

development." That was the main reason most of the participants maintained that they go to their friends for their reflective journal writing. A self-disclosure requires a safe environment, so the participants decided to maintain their relationships with their peers to improve their learning repertoire.

Similarly, Lestander, Lehto, and Engstrom (2016) state that with engaging in reflection through communicating with others, the learners focus on "maturing in the profession". They pointed out that one form of communicative learning involves peer learning that is a social factor that can increase learning outcomes. They also revealed that the scaffolding for their learning occurs when they follow other members of the community who plays the role of 'the knower' to them. These members are who the novice student nurses can go to for any clarification and educational help. The participants expressed this fact throughout their writing that other academic members were the sources of knowledge and motivation to them.

In fact, some learning involves understanding what others communicate. Communicative learning involves when individuals engage in others' values, beliefs, and feelings. As far as learning in workplace concerns, Mezirow (1990) underlines that not all learning involves problem-solving that pertains to action. Participants indicated that they have realized how communication with tutors, peers, and other members of the health team facilitates the learning process. They stated about the role of the nurse tutors and mentors in providing an adequate briefing on reflection and reflective journaling. They wanted their tutors to be someone to assist them in reflective writing, someone who could facilitate the process of reflective journaling and direct them towards better person. However, there were some instances that participants stated that it is the matter of "trust" that they prefer to go to their peers than to go to their tutors.

According to Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014), "giving a support" is to allow the learners to accomplish a task that would be troublesome; that a technique may be required to serve as scaffolding suitable to the learners' needs. However, the findings were more in favor of the end-product of the reflective journals and less on the conditions that produce them. Some learners may need assistance in the completion of a reflective task. Accordingly, the participants expressed their positive views regarding the use of a guideline for writing their journals. They reiterated that without a guideline, the writing journals had been very difficult and impossible. One of the participants considered the guideline as a supporting device by saying that "I need a guideline to write." In fact, these learners need guidance to produce journals that contain the reflected facts, rather than just recording daily events (Mann et al., 2009; Chirema, 2007). According to Plack & Greenberg (2005), if constructing a new meaning out of the experience is the aim for reflection, then the guidance toward developing analytical and critical thinking skills are necessary to help the learners become mature enough to make effective decisions in their workplace (Kear, 2013).

In the context of collaboration and guidance, the role of tutors was significantly highlighted by the participants in the aspect of receiving feedback. In fact, they reiterated that receiving feedback was an area of interest for them. They wanted to know what their tutors had thought about them, their writing as well as their nursing practice. Although one form of feedback was the receiving passing mark, as far as for reflection, they wanted to know how effective their reflection was in their tutors' mind. In fact, learners' abilities and willingness to reflect largely rely on expectation and quality and quantity of feedback received from their teacher (Bjerkvik & Hilli, 2019). The need for constant feedback from the tutors has been considered to be critical to the effective use of journals. The learner must be informed that looking or

revisiting the experiences is not the main goal but reflecting on the experiences is much more important and significant for deep learning and achieving professional growth (Kember et al., 1999; Plack & Greenberg, 2005; Kear, 2013).

Hence, it can be concluded that collaboration is the central component of effective reflective journaling. It promotes an educational environment where novice student nurses could interact with each other and reflect on their experiences, which could lead to the improvement of one's knowledge and skills.

7.2.3 Reflective Journaling Improves Awareness and Identity

Another major findings related to the use of reflective journaling among PRSN refers to the increased sense of awareness among the participants. This awareness, as Murphy (1993) points out, refers to the ability to analyze the situation critically, an ability to be in power of solving problems and even making sound decisions (Duffy, 2009). In many instances, participants stated that reflective journals help them realize their levels of knowledge as student nurses; which they need to improve themselves in nursing care. Conte (2015) describes this condition among learners a by-product of reflection that leads to learning. In this regard, one of the participants' statement was that reflective journaling is an effective way of increasing their knowledge upon realization of the areas of knowledge which required more practice in nursing skills.

A plethora of literature on reflection emphasizes the sense of self-awareness toward nursing practices that initiated from reflection (e.g. Chirema, 2007; Mann et al, 2009; Conte, 2015). In the same vein, Mann et al (2009) maintain that the formal requirements of reflective practice are a part of the licensing and validation process for the practitioners. That is, effective learning from experience is the offspring of

developing critical thought upon the practice throughout the lifetime. Thus, the practical level of process reflection identified in the participants' journals representing this idea that effective reflection from experience leads to deep learning. Likewise, Bandura (1986) points out that the ability to link new knowledge to the prior knowledge and integrating learners' beliefs, attitudes, and values with professional culture can lead the learners toward the development of self-awareness and self-regulation in their learning. Thus, it can be strongly advocated that student nurses at the practical level demonstrated self- awareness and self-identity as a by-product of reflection and reflective journaling.

Furthermore, the concept of forming self-identity can be considered a journey within oneself a micro-interaction an intrapersonal reality that makes it possible for the student nurses to observe, feel, and understand what their future profession has for them. That is, during practicum, this journey within oneself is very decisive for their future. The question of whether they want to be a nurse in the future is a constant predicament. Besides, there is a challenge of meso (interpersonal) - interaction in the practicum while they appear as student nurses. These student nurses were well aware of other more knowledgeable ones. Each one of them was assigned with one staff nurse upon their arrival in the ward. They knew their nursing care was being monitored by them, they should go to them in time of difficulty, and be part of this small community of practice for the time being. So, they need to practice a well-coordinated interpersonal behavior for their sake of learning. In fact, an element of seeking professional identity makes novice student nurses mindful of other's practices and behaviors. This fact was commonly reflected in their journals. The concept of role modeling implies that their awareness in clinical posting could lead to self-professional identity. The impact of others' behavior and actions in learners'

professional life has reported in several incidents and by the majority of the participants. The findings show that clinical posting has provided opportunities to the student nurses to critically observe and decide between good and bad behaviors or right or wrong practices. Their observation upon a significant member of a community was considered a part of the learning process, a gradual progression towards competency.

Park (2000) believes that the student nurses can develop competence in journaling that could represent the student nurses' progression in the hospital community; that is, they acquire the disciplinary knowledge required from them. In this way, student nurses gradually reduced their reliance on the more experienced others and increased their ability in socializing through the process of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The statements like "when I become a staff nurse" and other similar statements like "I know what to do as a future nurse" were quite common among the participants, should it be in their interviews or their reflective journals. Hence, in the journey of empowerment, student nurses are fully aware of the sense of belonging to the community of nurses.

7.2.4 Reflective Journaling Improves Emotional Challenges

The pre-registered student nurses, in general, expressed their positive views and perception regarding the value of reflective journaling through their interviews and in their journals. They believed that reflective journaling is valuable to their education as it can improve their knowledge and skills in the nursing profession. However, on some occasions, they have mentioned about the challenges in the context of reflection as well as RJW. In their seminal study, Boud et al (1985, p.19) stated that "reflection in the context of learning is a generic term and an affective

activity." They asserted that certain challenges of negative feeling toward RJW and undesired emotions associated with past-experience can hinder the learning from that experience. As far as reflective journaling concerns, student nurses quite occasionally expressed their negative thoughts regarding this activity; and some participants brought attention to issues and challenges concerning its relevance to the learning process and professional practice. Some participants, for instance, questioned the value of journaling when they can do something more beneficial the writing journals. Some openly stated why they should write when they can talk about the real-life incident that they want to talk about (Coward, 2011; Conte, 2015).

At the personal level, it was a common idea reiterated in their interviews as well as stated in their reflective journals, the participants expressed their emotional challenges from different incidences in clinical posting and others' behaviors towards them. Hwang et al., (2018) stated that student nurses perceived reflection as an opportunity to express their emotions on the nursing practice and to recognize the underlying reasons. They brought up the element of "trust" towards their tutor that stopped them of writing the truth in the case of "losing face" (Chirema, 2007). Thus, they decided to write something that their tutor wants to hear not something that exactly happened (Plack and Greenberg, 2009 Chirema, 2007). As our participants were evaluated and assessed in their reflective journals, they would write their journals in a very cautious way. That is, they are more thoughtful on the purpose RJW serves for them and less on the main role of RJW as an educational practice for their future. In this regard, Coward (2011) stated that one of the reasons why student nurses feel negative about reflective journaling is that it is used as an assessment tool.

There are many aspects of nursing practice in which the nurse tutor can judge the student nurses' competence and professionalism, but the element of professional trust is another reason why reflection should not be used as an assessment tool. Thus, confidentiality was also of concern in this study as the need for a safe environment and reassurance were extremely important (Chirema, 2007). It was reiterated by participants that establishing mutual trust between tutors and student nurses is the common ground for confidentiality which facilitates professional development among learners.

Other emotional challenges commonly revealed by the participants was the exploration of their feeling; a self-disclosure of hope and despair. Somehow journal writing allows them to breathe out what they couldn't utter openly and directly and express their feeling without fear. Thus, if an individual wish to engage in "personal growth" the negative feelings such as anger, regret, distaste, distrust, disorientation, and fear should be dismissed and replaced with positive encouraging, motivating feelings if one desires to see the personal transformation. Some participants also expressed their feeling about the difficulties they have in expressing their feeling in their journals. These emotional explorations about reflective journaling by learners were supported by Jasper (1999); and likewise, Chirema (2007) stated that although these are elements to be considered in reflective writing, they can be dealt with if the technique could be learned. The issue of time to write journals was the major emotional distress that was expressed by most participants.

In short, this section discussed the evaluation of the role of reflective journal writing in the process of improving knowledge and skills. In their interviews, the participants highlighted that journaling improved their knowledge in the process of learning through effective reflection. Moreover, reflective journaling is helping them

to explore their emotions, increases their communication skills, and empowers them to be more aware of their learning needs. Participants in this study were extremely positive about the use of reflective journals, but they requested to receive feedback from their tutor on their reflective journals as their feedback could serve as guidance for reflection and reflective writing. They requested more educational time to be allocated to reflective journaling. Some also explored their concern about the importance of confidentiality and reassurance to have a better relationship with their tutor. To conclude, reflective journal writing is a vital component in self-articulation and communication with others in the process of promoting reflection. They are valuable educational tools in developing reflectivity among student nurses as well as they are valuable in promoting professional knowledge and skills.

7.3 Implications

In light of the findings and the review of the related literature in the field of reflective journaling among student nurses, the following implications were drawn for a variety of purposes in nursing education.

7.3.1 Theoretical Implication for Reflective journal Writing

This study was guided by the theory of transformative learning proposed by Mezirow (1991). Through in-depth descriptions of the findings, it was revealed that the mechanisms of reflection can be elucidated in three levels of content, process, and premise; and these mechanisms are interrelated to each other. In other studies that utilized this theory (e.g. Plack and Greenberg, 2005; Chirema, 2007; Kear, 2013), it was explicitly claimed that the learners experience content, process, and premise reflection in a hierarchy. In some studies this manner was in cyclical (Kreber and Cranton, 2000; McCoach & Smith, 2016); or in a linear fashion (Kear, 2013).

That is, the learners are non-reflector, reflector, and critical reflector, respectively. However, this study has implications on this part of the theory that the learners travel back and forth during their nursing practice from a stage of descriptive to practical and from practical to critical and vice versa. Thorough explanations were provided with graphic illustrations in section 7. 2.1; they are stating that the arrows representing the learners are traveling through different levels of reflection to enhance their learning. With these findings, this study introduces a new perspective to the growing research on transformative learning theory. However, more studies are required to examine this overlapping fashion of levels of reflection with a larger number of participants.

7.3.2 Pedagogical Implications for Reflective Journal Writing

The overarching purpose of the present study was to create a solid account of reflective journaling among Malaysian pre-registered student nurses. The findings of this study have significant pedagogical implications for nursing education. That is, reflective journal writing should be incorporated into the nursing curriculum more prominently, as it can be considered as a strategy to improve nursing student's experiential and practical_knowledge in the journey of becoming a professional nurse. According to Boldrini and Cattaneo (2014), reflection has a strong connection between the practical element and the theoretical one in workplaces. That is, practice reflection and reflective journaling are to be of great significance in the nursing educational system; because effective reflection can allow for deep learning to occur in the field of healthcare professions. Therefore, the novice student nurses could gain a deeper knowledge and better understanding of the nursing practice in practicum.

Reflective journaling is considered a cognitively demanding activity; so, the nurse tutors needed to carefully plan strategies to facilitate reflection among PRSN. Thus, nurse tutors must provide some practical devices to realize and operationalize reflection. Accordingly, PRSN should be encouraged to use reflective journals; therefore, the nurse tutors could facilitate such activities as a part of professional practice by providing samples of reflective journals, encouragement through feedback, and by establishing a positive academic relationship. The content of guided reflection must be explained to the students to know how this guideline can facilitate reflection. The nursing profession can use reflective activities to develop problem-solving abilities; the ability to solve problems independently through the use of reflection can reduce anxiety among students. For instance, the use of open-ended questions of the guideline would facilitate deep thinking by which novice PRSN can gain insight into their tacit knowledge, prior experience of their nursing practices. In addition, nurse tutors must be ascertained that the PRSN is reflecting in/on their practice on the real-life events in the workplace. It should be determined whether they merely answered the questions of the guideline on a real-life event or made up the stories.

The participants stated that they wanted and welcomed comments and constructive feedback from their tutors on their RJ, but seldom get meaningful feedback from them. Although the grading of their reflective writings was for evaluation and assessment purposes, it has remained a controversial issue for the learners. Although the grading for reflective journal writing was clear for PRSN, they expressed their anxiety over having to write RJW when expectations for this activity had not been explicit.

This study also indicated that the guided reflective journaling as evidence of analytic thinking of student nurses was an indication of their ability to see the "big picture" of the real-life events in practicum. Further, they could see the process and the purpose of the activities in the hospital situation and observe the outcome of each one as something precious to consider, to think, and to remember. In the same vein, PRSN needed to have the opportunity to make meaning out of the practices in a clinical situation. In other words, reflections can improve the self-awareness to retain knowledge and skills essential for professionalism. Furthermore, they could realize their strong points, their learning needs, and appreciate their mistakes as to be constructive. Thus, in either situation, reflective journaling can motivate them to be a better person, a better nurse in the future.

7.3.3 Practical Implications for Reflective Journal Writing

The exploration of reflective journal writing amongst healthcare professionals such as pre-registered student nurses in Malaysia is an area of study that cannot be overlooked, as the reflective journal writing can be beneficial for both educational and practical reasons.

Through a multidimensional investigation, the findings suggested some practical implications for the use of reflective journaling in the nursing curriculum. First, this study is valuable to nursing education because it did substantiate reflective journaling as an effective educational strategy as related to learning through reflection. Second, the present study implies that the ability to reflect at the higher order of thinking is a valuable asset to possess in a profession of nursing that is based upon human interaction; it is more valuable for learners in a sense that reflection can allow them to salvage learning that stays with them all through their lives. As the findings maintain the value of multi-drafting at a more critical level of thinking in

journaling can direct the participants in a more self-directed learning. Mezirow (2000) reiterates that this self-directed learning can involve learners in making sound decisions, engage in problem-solving situations, and shape the learners' self-identity.

The ability to reflect effectively occurs overtime. Within the field of nursing education, this ability can be improved through the continuing reflection with constant guidance. The student nurses' involvement in reflection required to conduct critical thinking skills, while also being able to apply learned knowledge on the field. According to the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE 2010) in Malaysia, the focus on "critical thinking and ability to use knowledge" is integral to the nursing education, so that the competent and professional nursing graduates can be produced through deliberate and constant guidance.

It must be anticipated by the novice student nurse that their effective reflection upon their nursing practice could avoid automation which, otherwise, could put their effective practice in danger to the extent of being psychologically worn out. On the other hand, it would be better if nurse tutors have sessions for discussion and give meaningful feedback to PRSN on the subject of reflection, and the reflection upon an event.

7.3.4 Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study have shown that reflection and reflective practices are not an idea whose time has passed. The indication of its importance and the interest in this topic has been featured in a plethora of literature. This study had intentions to draw on different implications that could enlighten the paths for future research.

One of the elements that motivated the participants for effective RJ was feedback from their nurse tutors. Since feedback in journals contributes to the improvement of reflection and motivation for better reflective writing, a longitudinal study could be conducted to investigate the impact of feedback. This study was conducted within a limited period of time and explored solid facts on reflective journaling among PRSN. However, with the motivating role of feedback, the results of such study can open doors to a variety of findings namely, building positive relationship and communication with nurse tutors and their novice students, creating positive attitudes of journals during the process, cultivating collaborative, friendly, and constructive atmosphere for reflective journaling, just name a few.

In this study, the researcher realized that being critical is not a common practice in Malaysian-culture society. This would be an additional contribution to the world of knowledge to study the relationship of reflection, reflective journaling, and critical thinking regarding the culture of participants. In this case, the future research could accommodate culture-fraught nature of critical thinking in reflective journaling a leading approach in pedagogy. The possible outcome could be broad understandings of a multicultural range of our learners and the levels of reflection and guided or unguided reflective writing. In a society with different cultural backgrounds like Malaysia, a comparative study of the effect of culture on the level of reflection could introduce a wide horizon to the study of reflection and reflective journal writing.

Furthermore, a study focusing on emphasis on critical discussion before writing the journals could encourage the student nurses to have dialectic reflection. This approach provides better awareness to the learners that the relationship between

theory and practice is interrelated to other factors. Thus, the impact of social context could be highlighted and added to the literature of reflection.

This study used IPA matrix to evaluate the participants' perception of RJW. To the researcher's knowledge, there is no study on reflective journaling and IPA matrix in the literature of reflection and reflective writing. Therefore, it could be a suggestion for future research to accommodate the IPA matrix and reflective journaling with larger participants to evaluate the relationship of the importance of RJW and the learners' performance in a more scientific manner.

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