EJOVOC
(ELECTRONIC JOURNAL OF VOCATIONAL COLLEGES)
ISSN: 2146-7684
Aralık/December, 2025
Cilt (Volume) 15, Sayı (Number) 2

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIDWIFERY STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL MOTIVATION AND PROFESSIONAL BELONGING

EBELİK ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN MESLEKİ GÜDÜLENME VE EBELİK AİDİYET DÜZEYLERİ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ

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Makale Geliş Tarihi/Date of Submission : 09.08.2025
Makale Kabul Tarihi/Date of Acceptance : 27.09.2025

Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article
Doi: 10.17339/ejovoc.1760613

Abstract

Midwifery students' sense of professional belonging and motivation significantly affect both their academic success and their professional adaptation and satisfaction after graduation. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the relationship between midwifery students' professional motivation levels and their perceptions of professional belonging. The analytical-cross-sectional study was conducted with 246 students enrolled in the Midwifery Department of a university in western Turkey. Research data were collected using the "Personal Information Form," the "Motivation Sources and Problems Scale" and the "Midwifery Belonging Scale". Research data were evaluated using One-way ANOVA test and Pearson's correlation test. The study found that the mean scores of students on the "Motivation Sources and Problems Scale" and the "Midwifery Belonging Scale" increased statistically significantly in parallel with their class level. In addition, the study found a positive, high-intensity, significant relationship between students' motivation levels and their levels of belonging in midwifery. In the study, it was observed that the students' motivation levels and midwifery belonging levels increased with the grade level and there was a positive and highly significant relationship between these two concepts.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Midwifery, student, motivation, identity

Öz

Ebelik öğrencilerinin mesleğe yönelik aidiyet duygusu ve motivasyonları hem akademik başarılarını hem de mezuniyet sonrası mesleki uyum ve doyumlarını önemli ölçüde etkiler. Dolayısıyla bu araştırma ebelik öğrencilerinin mesleki güdülenme düzeyleri ile mesleki aidiyet algıları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Analitik-kesitsel tipteki araştırma Türkiye'nin batısındaki bir üniversitenin Ebelik Bölümünde öğrenim gören 246 öğrenci ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma verileri; ''Kişisel Bilgi Formu'', ''Güdülenme Kaynakları ve Sorunları Ölçeği'' ve ''Ebelik Aidiyet Ölçeği'' ile toplanmıştır. Araştırma verileri One-way ANOVA testi ve Pearson korelasyon testi ile değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmada öğrencilerin ''Güdülenme Kaynakları ve Sorunları Ölçeği'' ve ''Ebelik Aidiyet Ölçeği'' puan ortalamalarının sınıf seviyesine paralel olarak istatistiksel açıdan anlamlı şekilde arttığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca araştırmada öğrencilerin güdülenme düzeyleri ile ebelikte aidiyet düzeyleri arasında pozitif yönde yüksek şiddette anlamlı ilişki belirlenmiştir. Çalışmada öğrencilerinin güdülenme düzeyleri ve ebelik aidiyet düzeylerinin sınıf seviyesi ile birlikte arttığı ve bu iki kavram arasında pozitif yönde yüksek şiddette anlamlı ilişki olduğu görülmüştür.

Keywords: Ebelik, öğrenci, güdülenme, aidiyet

Atıf (Citation): Aknaz, D., Başçı, B., Amanak, K. & Altınkaya, S. Ö. (2025). The relationship between midwifery students' professional motivation and professional belonging. *Electronic Journal of Vocational Colleges (EJOVOC), 15*(2), 18-25. https://doi.org/10.17339/ejovoc.1760613

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Giriş

Bu çalışma, ebelik öğrencilerinin mesleki güdülenme düzeyleri ile mesleki aidiyet algıları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada ulaşılmak istenen temel hedef, öğrencilerin mesleğe ilişkin içsel motivasyonlarının ve mesleğe aidiyet düzeylerinin aralarındaki ilişkiyi belirlemektir. Güdülenme insan organizmasını davranışa yönlendiren, davranışın şiddetini ve enerji düzeyini belirleyen, davranışlara yön tayin eden ve sürekliliğini sağlayan bir kavramdır. Bu kavram, insanların mesleki gelişimine olan yaklaşımını, öğrenmeye istekliliğini ve meslekte ilerlemeye ilişkin tutumlarını belirleyen önemli bir psikolojik unsurdur. Öte yandan mesleki aidiyet, bireyin kendisini ait hissettiği meslekle kurduğu çok faktörlü bağları içermektedir. Kişinin mesleğini bir kimlik unsuru olarak görmesi, mevcut meslekle bütünleşmesi ve kendini mesleğin bir parçası olarak hissetmesi, mesleki aidiyeti gösteren önemli göstergeler arasındadır. Sağlık alanında görev yapan profesyoneller tarafından bu iki kavram oldukça önemlidir. Şöyle ki; sağlık hizmetlerinin içeriği ve kalitesi, hizmet alan hastaların memnuniyeti, ekip içi iletişim ve iş birliği, meslekteki gelişim ve son olarak uzak dönemde oluşacak mesleki doyum gibi birçok bileşen, bireylerin mesleki güdülenme ve aidiyet düzeyleriyle doğrudan ilişki içerisindedir. Ebelik, yüksek sorumluluk gerektiren ve uygulama odaklı bir meslek olması nedeniyle, ayrıca özel bir öneme sahiptir. Ebelik öğrencilerinin eğitimleri sırasında mesleğe ilişkin geliştirdikleri aidiyet duygusu ve içsel güdülenme ve motivasyon düzeyleri, yalnızca öğrenim hayatlarındaki akademik başarılarını değil, yanı sıra mezuniyet sonrası mesleki rollerini benimseme durumlarını, sorumluluk alma becerilerini ve mesleki doyumlarını da önemli derecede etkilemektedir. Dolayısıyla, iki kavram arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi, hem ebelik eğitim sürecinin kalitesini artırmaya yönelik girişimlerin belirlenmesinde hem de sağlık sisteminde çalışmak üzere nitelikli ebelerin yetiştirilmesinde önemli katkılar sağlayacaktır.

Yöntem

Araştırma, 2019-2020 eğitim-öğretim yılında Türkiye'nin batısında yer alan bir üniversitenin Ebelik Bölümünde öğrenim gören 246 ebelik öğrencisi ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırma analitik-kesitsel desenle tasarlanmış olup, veriler "Kişisel Bilgi Formu", "Güdülenme Kaynakları ve Sorunları Ölçeği (GKSÖ)" ve "Ebelik Aidiyet Ölçeği (EAÖ)" ile öğrenci öz bildirimine dayalı olarak toplanmıştır. Araştırma grubuna 18-30 yaş aralığında olan, araştırmaya gönüllü olarak katılan ve ruhsal ya da iletişimsel herhangi bir sorunu olmayan öğrenciler dâhil edilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde SPSS 18.0 programı kullanılmış; verilerin dağılımına göre parametrik testler tercih edilmiştir. Sınıflar arası farklılıkları incelemek amacıyla One-way ANOVA testi iki değişken arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek için ise Pearson korelasyon testi uygulanmıştır.

Bulgular

Araştırmanın bulguları, ebelik öğrencilerinin sınıf düzeyi arttıkça hem Güdülenme Kaynakları ve Sorunları Ölçeği (GKSÖ) puan ortalamalarının (1. sınıf: 14.15±1.12, 2. sınıf: 15.21±0.89, 3. sınıf: 16.14±1.23 ve 4. sınıf: 17.54±0.41) hem de Ebelik Aidiyet Ölçeği (EAÖ) puan ortalamalarının (1. sınıf: 79.12±8.14, 2. sınıf: 83,61±7,23, 3. sınıf: 87,22±6,12 ve 4. sınıf: 91,87±6,77) anlamlı şekilde arttığını ortaya koymuştur. Birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin güdülenme puan ortalaması en düşük düzeydeyken, dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin puanları en yüksek düzeydedir. Benzer bir durum, ebelik aidiyet ölçeği puanlarında da gözlemlenmiştir. Bu bulgular, mesleki eğitim sürecinin ilerlemesiyle birlikte öğrencilerin mesleğe olan ilgilerinin ve bağlılıklarının arttığını göstermektedir. Özellikle üst sınıf öğrencilerinin daha fazla klinik deneyim yaşamaları, mesleki rollerini daha yakından tanımaları ve mesleki yeterliliklerini artırmaları, hem güdülenme hem de aidiyet duygularını olumlu yönde etkileyen başlıca etmenler olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Elde edilen bir diğer önemli bulgu ise öğrencilerin güdülenme düzeyleri ile mesleki aidiyet düzeyleri arasında pozitif yönde ve yüksek düzeyde anlamlı bir ilişkinin bulunmasıdır. Pearson korelasyon analizi sonuçlarına göre, güdülenme düzeyi yükseldikçe öğrencilerin mesleki aidiyet algıları da artmaktadır ($r= 0.865$, $p= 0.032$).

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Bu sonuçlar güdülenmenin sadece öğrenme sürecinde değil, aynı zamanda bireyin mesleği benimsemesi ve kendini o mesleğe ait hissetmesi bakımından önemli bir rol oynadığını göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla, eğitim sürecinde öğrencilerin mesleğe ilişkin motivasyonlarının desteklenmesi, sadece akademik başarıya değil, ayrıca mesleki kimlik oluşumu ve gelişimine ek olarak aidiyet hissine de katkı sunmaktadır. Eğitim içeriğinde uygulama bulunan derslerin artırılması, uygulama ortamlarında öğrencilere daha fazla sorumluluk verilmesi, mentorluk yönteminin geliştirilmesi ve yaygınlaştırılması, meslekte rol model alınan kişilerle yapılan etkileşimler öğrencilerin mesleklerine olan aidiyet duygularını güçlendirecek önemli öğeler olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Ek olarak öğretim elemanlarının öğrencilerle içinde bulunduğu iletişim, öğrencinin eğitim aldığı kuruma ve mesleki aidiyet duygusunu doğrudan etkileyebilecek bir diğer

önemli unsurdur. Araştırmanın sınırlılıkları arasında, verilerin yalnızca bir üniversitede toplanmış olması ve öz bildirim yöntemiyle elde edilmesi yer almaktadır. Bu nedenle sonuçların genellenebilirliği sınırlı olup, farklı bölgelerden ve farklı popülasyonlardan elde edilecek verilerle karşılaştırmalı çalışmalar yapılması önerilmektedir. Ayrıca, nitel yöntemlerle öğrencilerin güdülenme ve aidiyet düzeylerini daha ayrıntılı anlamaya ilişkin çalışmaların yapılması, mevcut literatüre önemli katkılar sunabilir. Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma ebelik öğrencilerinin güdülenme ve aidiyet düzeylerinin birbiriyle yakından ilişkili olduğunu ve bu iki kavramın eğitim süreci boyunca anlamlı biçimde geliştiğini göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla, ebelik eğitim müfredatının sadece bilgi ve beceri kazandırmaya odaklı değil, yanı sıra öğrencilerin mesleki kimlik gelişimlerini ve mesleğe olan aidiyet duygularını da desteklemeye ilişkin şekilde oluşturulmalıdır. Öğrencilerin güdülenme kaynaklarının geliştirilmesi ve aidiyet duygularının desteklenmesi, meslekten aldıkları doyumun artmasına, meslekte kalıcı olmalarının sağlanmasına ve toplum sağlığına sunacakları sağlık bakım hizmetlerinin niteliğine doğrudan katkı sunacaktır.

INTRODUCTION

Professional motivation refers to students' internal passion and motivation toward a profession, while professional belonging refers to an individual's perception of themselves as an integral part of that profession and their adoption of that identity. These two concepts are particularly important in the field of healthcare, as the quality of healthcare services depends not only on technical knowledge and skills but also on professional commitment and motivation. Professional motivation and identity are considered fundamental psychosocial structures that directly influence students' professional development processes, their commitment to the profession, and their professional performance after graduation (Bilgin & Efe, 2021; Duruk et al., 2021; Güner et al., 2015). Midwifery is a professional healthcare discipline that integrates scientific knowledge, clinical skills, ethical principles, and humanistic values. It is a field practiced with a strong sense of motivation and professional belonging. In order for an occupation to be regarded as a true profession, it must be carried out with a high level of competence and minimal error, be based on a comprehensive understanding of its theoretical and practical foundations, gain societal recognition, and be sustained through dedication and professional commitment (Balçık Çolak & İçke, 2023; Demirbaş Meydan & Kaya, 2018; Karaca Saydam, 2015). Moreover, motivation plays a critical role in the education of midwifery students. It facilitates effective learning, the development of new skills, enhanced academic performance, and the cultivation of critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, professional competencies, care-related practices, and communication skills (Doğan & Yıldırım, 2019; Ghiasvand et al., 2017). In this context, various studies have been conducted on the professional motivation levels of midwifery students in Turkey. Ocakçı and Bilgin (2011) conducted a study with a large sample group and found that 65-70% of students chose midwifery as their major voluntarily, revealing that this voluntary choice had a significant effect on students' professional motivation. Voluntary choice enables students to embrace the profession as an ideal rather than a duty, thereby increasing internal motivation and positively influencing the learning process. Duruk and colleagues (2021), in a study comparing final-year nursing and midwifery students, found that midwifery students had higher levels of intrinsic motivation than nursing students. This finding shows that commitment to the midwifery profession and individual motivation are sustainable throughout the education process. On the other hand, studies on professional identity show that these concepts are closely related to professional motivation. Yurtsal and Erkan (2023) emphasize that ethical values, professional awareness, and attitudes specific to the profession must be systematically and structurally instilled in students throughout the education process in order to strengthen the professional identity of the midwifery profession. Similarly, studies conducted by Güner et al. (2015) reveal that adopting a scientific approach and supporting the professionalization process are indispensable for the profession to gain an independent and respected place in society. In this regard, it is recommended that education programs be enriched with content that supports professional identity development, rather than merely transferring technical knowledge. Students' development of a positive professional identity positively affects both their professional satisfaction and their retention in the profession. This is particularly evident in students who have chosen the profession voluntarily; it has been reported that these students' levels of intrinsic motivation and belonging are significantly higher than those of students who have entered the field involuntarily or as a result of compulsory choices (Bilgin & Efe, 2021). A review of the literature revealed that no studies have examined the professional motivation levels and midwifery identity levels of midwifery students together. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively explain the relationship between the professional motivation levels and professional identity perceptions of midwifery students. Furthermore, the findings are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on this subject in the literature.

In this regard, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. Do midwifery students' motivation levels show a significant difference according to class levels?

2. Do midwifery students' professional commitment levels show a significant difference according to class levels?

3. What is the relationship between midwifery students' motivation levels and professional commitment levels?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study was conducted with 246 midwifery students enrolled at a university in western Turkey. At the time the research was conducted, a total of 368 students were enrolled in the relevant department. No sample size calculation was performed; instead, given the accessibility of the population, the aim was to reach all students. Students who volunteered and were between the ages of 18 and 30 were included in the study. Students who did not attend classes for various reasons during the term or who took a break from their education and were diagnosed with any mental health or communication issues were removed from the study. Data were collected based on students' self-reports in the classroom setting. The researchers distributed the questionnaire forms during in-class sessions; students completed them individually, after which they were collected by the researchers. This method ensured that the data collection process was

systematic and controlled. Research data were collected based on student self-reports using the "Personal Information Form," "Motivation Sources and Problems Scale," and "Midwifery Belonging Scale".

Personal Information Form: This form consists of questions assessing the descriptive characteristics of the students. Form was prepared by researchers in line with the relevant literature (Acat & Kösgeroğlu, 2006; Başkaya, 2018; Başkaya et al., 2020; Çelik et al., 2015).

Motivation Sources and Problems Scale (MSPS): The 24-item scale was developed by Acat and Köşgeroğlu in 2006, and its validity and reliability were tested. This scale consists of three subscales: "Intrinsic Motivation," "Extrinsic Motivation," and "Negative Motivation." Higher scores indicate greater motivation Cronbach's alpha was reported as 0.82 (Çelik et al., 2015). In this study, the total scale score was used, and the internal consistency coefficient was found to be 0.79.

Midwifery Belonging Scale (MBS): It includes 22 positive items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, and its reliability and validity were established by Başkaya and colleagues (2020). The scale consists of four subscales: emotional belonging, fulfillment of professional roles and responsibilities, professional development, and utilization of opportunities and limits of authority in the profession. The scale score is obtained by summing the item scores. Higher scores indicate higher midwifery identity. Başkaya et al. (2018) Cronbach's alpha was reported the scale's 0.905 (Başkaya, 2018). In this study, the total scale score was used, and the internal consistency coefficient was found to be 0.812.

Statistical Analysis

IBM SPSS 18.0 (PASW Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) was used to analyze the data, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to assess whether the data followed a normal distribution. One-way ANOVA was used to compare students' motivation levels and midwifery identity levels according to their classes. The relationship between students' motivation levels and midwifery identity was evaluated using the Pearson correlation test.

Ethical Statement

This study was approved by the Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Adnan Menderes University (Aydın), approved on April 9, 2020, with approval number 92340882-050.04.04.

RESULTS

The average age of the students was 21.36±3.34; 25.6% of the students were first-year students, 48.4% had a medium income, 62.2% lived in dormitories, 43.9% have lived in the district for the longest period of time, 57.3% have a nuclear family structure, and 75.2% chose to enroll in the department voluntarily (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of Students (n=246)

Characteristics	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Class		
1 st grade	63	25.6
2 st grade	60	24.4
3 st grade	61	24.8
4 st grade	62	25.2
Income		
Low	64	26.0
Medium	119	48.4
High	63	25.6
Place of residence		
With family	31	12.6
With friends	62	25.2
In a dormitory	153	62.2
Longest place of residence		
Province	67	27.2
District	108	43.9
Village	71	28.9
Family type		
Nuclear	141	57.3
Extended	78	31.7
Broken	27	10.0
Voluntary admission to the department		
Yes	185	75.2
No	61	24.8

Characteristics	Mean ± SD
Age	21.36±3.34

The study found that students' MSPS score averages increased in parallel with their grade level (1st grade: 14.15±1.12, 2nd grade: 15.21±0.89, 3rd grade: 16.14±1.23, and 4th grade: 17.54±0.41), and this increase was found to be statistically significant ($p<0.05$) (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of MSPS Average Scores by Class (n=246)

Class	N	MSPS (Mean ± SD)	F	p
1 st grade	63	14.15±1.12	0.524	0.011
2 st grade	60	15.21±0.89		
3 st grade	61	16.14±1.23		
4 st grade	62	17.54±0.41		

Table 3 shows the distribution of students' mean scores by grade. Upon examination of the table, it is observed that students' MBS score averages (1st grade: 79.12±8.14, 2nd grade: 83.61±7.23, 3rd grade: 87.22±6.12, and 4th grade: 91.87±6.77) increase statistically significantly in parallel with the grade level ($p<0.05$).

Table 3. Students' MBS Average Scores by Class (n=246)

Class	N	MBS (Mean ± SD)	F	p
1 st grade	63	79.12±8.14	0.234	0.000
2 st grade	60	83,61±7,23		
3 st grade	61	87,22±6,12		
4 st grade	62	91,87±6,77		

A comparison of students' MSPS and MBS average scores is provided in Table 4. Significant positive correlation was found between students' motivation levels and their sense of belonging to midwifery ($r= 0.865$, $p= 0.032$).

Table 4. Comparison of students' MSPS and MBS mean scores (n=246)

MSPS (Mean ± SD)	MBS (Mean ± SD)	r	p
15.77±6.21	85.46±7.11	0.865	0.032

r: Pearson correlation coefficient, $p < .05$

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study found that midwifery students' motivation levels increased significantly with to their class levels. This result is important in that it shows that students' motivation levels develop positively as the education process progresses. It is thought that this increase, which is observed in parallel with class level, may be related to students' acquisition of professional identity, increased clinical experience, and strengthened awareness of their future roles. In particular, students in upper years taking on more responsibility and experiencing their professional competence more may be a factor that increases motivation. This situation once again highlights the importance of practical courses and clinical experience in education programs. Supporting students not only with theoretical knowledge but also with opportunities for practice contributes to strengthening their professional motivation. However, it should not be forgotten that motivation is influenced by many variables, such as individual differences, learning styles, academic support, social environment, and psychological factors. Therefore, developing customized support systems to meet the needs of students at different grade levels can further increase their motivation levels. On the other hand, Karapelit and Memiş (2022) conducted a study with midwifery and nursing students and found no statistically significant difference in motivation levels between class levels. The limited number of studies in the literature and the different results obtained in these studies indicate that further research is needed on this topic. In this study, it was determined that the average scores of midwifery students on the “Midwifery Belonging Scale” increased significantly as their class level increased. This finding shows that students' feelings of belonging to the profession strengthened as they progressed through their classes. Similar results have been found in the literature. Levett-Jones and Lathlean (2009) emphasized that the development of students' sense of belonging during clinical education is decisive in their adoption of professional roles. In particular, supportive relationships in clinical settings contribute to students feeling more accepted and belonging to the profession. Similarly, Licqurish and Seibold (2007) noted that midwifery students' feelings of exclusion during their first clinical experiences decreased over time; as students progressed through their coursework, they became more integrated with their professional identities. This can be considered an important psychosocial development explaining the increase in belonging scores. In Çevik and Alanı's (2021) study, it was found that third-year students' professional belonging scores were significantly higher than

those of fourth-year students. On the other hand, Yıldırım et al. (2022) reported that the average score on the "Midwifery Belonging Scale" was higher among fourth-year students and that there was a statistically significant difference between first-year and fourth-year students ($p<0.05$). In particular, fourth-year students taking on more active roles in their fields of practice, establishing stronger relationships with team members, and developing their professional self-efficacy are among the factors that increase their sense of belonging. All of these findings reveal that professional belonging is not merely an individual emotion but also a dynamic structure shaped by the educational process and environment. However, the limited number of studies on the development of professional belonging among midwifery students indicates a need for further research in this area. In this regard, applied education models, mentoring programs, and supportive clinical environments that support students' levels of belonging are of great importance. Additionally, the style of relationship that teaching staff establish with students can also play an important role in strengthening institutional belonging. The study found a positive, highly significant correlation between students' motivation sources and problems scale scores and their midwifery belonging scale scores. This result is important in that it shows that as students' motivation levels increase, their sense of professional belonging also strengthens. Similar findings are also found in the literature. Ryan and Deci (2000) emphasize that students' internal and external motivation sources are decisive for professional commitment. In practice-based professions with intense social interaction, such as midwifery, students' sense of belonging to the profession can directly affect both their learning processes and their professional development (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009). Therefore, increasing motivation levels emerges as a critical educational goal in terms of developing a sense of belonging. On the other hand, the study has some limitations. The research data were collected based on students' self-reports. Therefore, the data may not fully align with the observations of experts. As the data were gathered through self-reported measures from students, they may involve subjective interpretations and may not entirely reflect objective evaluations that would be made by professionals in the field. Additionally, since the study was conducted in a single location, the results obtained represent only the sample of this study.

This study revealed a positive and highly significant relationship between students' motivation levels and their sense of belonging to the midwifery profession. According to the findings, both motivation levels and the sense of belonging to the midwifery profession increased significantly as students progressed through their class levels. Based on these results, supporting students' sources of motivation and reducing the obstacles they encounter can contribute to strengthening their professional identity. In addition, integrating motivation methods into educational programs can support students' commitment to the midwifery profession and their long-term professional development.

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