



Perception towards nursing profession among higher secondary students

Ms. Rajasree. J

Asst Professor, Dept. of Child Health Nursing, Sree Gokulam Nursing College Sree Gokulam Medical College And Research Foundation Venjaramoodu

ABSTRACT

Nursing is indeed one of the noblest professions in the world. However, availability of nursing professionals is below accepted norms per population. One way to improve this situation is to attract more and more young adults to nursing profession. The present study regarding perception towards nursing profession among higher secondary students was conducted in two Government Higher Secondary Schools in Thiruvananthapuram Dist. Objective: The purpose of the study was to assess the perception of Higher Secondary Students towards nursing profession. Methodology: Research approach used in this study was quantitative approach and the design is descriptive research design. Non probability purposive sampling technique was used to select two hundred higher secondary students. Data was collected by using Kohler and Edward's Career Questionnaire. Results: Results shows that majority (85.5%) of the higher secondary students perceived nursing positively but only a few (10%) of them were definitely considering it as their career choice.

KEYWORDS : Perception, Higher secondary students, nursing profession

Introduction

Nursing has been called the oldest of the arts and the youngest of the profession. For as long as there has been life, there has been the need to provide care and comfort to those suffering from illness and injury. Nursing is considered as one of the greatest of humanitarian services and all people whether ill or well, rich or poor, literate or illiterate, young or old, at work or at play are likely at some point in their life to depend upon the care provided by the nurses.

Nursing is not an easy activity to define, but effort has been made by many scholars and health organizations to define it. Among those definitions Virginia Henderson's definition of nursing is most elaborated one. Virginia Henderson defined Nursing practice as the unique function of the nurse is to assist the individual, sick or well, in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to a peaceful death) that he would perform unaided if he had the necessary strength, will, or knowledge, and to do this in such a way as to help him to gain independence as rapidly as possible.

According to American Nurses Association (ANA), Nursing is the protection, promotion and optimization of health and abilities; prevention of illness and injury; alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response; and advocacy in health care for individuals, families, communities and population. Whatever notion or idea best describes nursing, it is clear that there are differences in the way people perceive nursing.

Perception by itself is merely defined as an idea, belief, or an image that people have as a result of how they see or understand something. More importantly, Perception of nursing may vary depending upon age, educational level, professional experience, occupational, cultural and social factors. Historically, nurses have been predominantly females who were easily recognized by a white hat and uniform making the professional and the profession more visible. Today, white uniforms and hats have been replaced by vivid colored scrub suits worn by both male and female nurses, as well as the majority of other employees in healthcare. Literature suggests that student's career perceptions are highly individual and are the product of contracted images of jobs they see for themselves, derived images from media, and delegated images from parents and friends. Student's perception of nursing is based on their exposure to hospital situation, where they have observed nurses attending to patient. Majority of people observe nurses giving basic care like cleaning, bathing and grooming of patient which probably is not perceived as a dignified job. Majority are not well informed about the academic exposure and career opportunities in nursing profession. Many students have not spend time with a nursing professional or volunteered in to a health care setting to acquire a background on which to establish perception about nursing, and thus have limited their opportunities for more informed career decision making skills.

A recent survey published in the Nursing journal in India found a tremendously low interest amongst students wanting to take up Nursing as a Profession. A study of 200 children in Pune who opted for biology in Class II found only 39 % interested in Nursing as a first priority. Their knowledge of Nursing as a Profession was also poor with 66% students having a knowledge score below 50%.

When stepping out the gates of school or college, there is wide variety of careers available & awaiting for youngsters. Young people have career ideas of their own. Many youngsters, in spite of the wide range of career choices, instinctively opt for engineering or medicine. One reason could be lack of information. Especially in the case of Nursing many studies reveal that most adolescents are aware of the calling & helping nature of Nursing but have little knowledge about the diverse Nursing career opportunities in teaching, management & administration. Therefore understanding students' perceptions of nursing can be helpful in empowering students with excellent career making skills which will determine the future of nursing.

Materials and methods

In this study, the researcher adopted a quantitative approach using a descriptive design. The study was conducted in two Government Higher Secondary Schools, Thiruvananthapuram Dist. Plus-two students from science stream were selected purposively and two hundred students were selected among them by simple random sampling technique (100 students from each school). After obtaining consent from the subjects, socio demographic proforma and career questionnaire were administered and data were collected.

Tools and techniques

The instrument used in this study is a modified version of Career questionnaire designed by Kohler P A and Edwards T A (1990) This tool was selected because of its ease of use with higher secondary students.

The career questionnaire consists of fifty three questions, grouped into three sections.

Section A:

This section consists of ten items seeking information about demographic proforma of higher secondary students such as age, gender, education of parents, occupation of parents, monthly income of family, relatives in nursing profession, type of family and previous academic performance

Section B:

This section consists of forty questions on a five point likert scale assessing the perception towards nursing profession. The questions were grouped into the categories of career image, preference and accessibility and identified as positive or negative. Responses to the

likert scale questions that contained statements establishing a positive perception of nursing were coded using the following ordinal scale , 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree,3=undecided,4=agree and 5=strongly agree. Responses to questions portraying a negative perception were reverse coded.

Section C

This section consists of three questions seeking information about participant's belief regarding nurse's wages, determining whether they were considering nursing as their career and identifies their primary source of information about nursing

Data collection procedures

The study was conducted from 23/06/2014 to 28/06/2014 in two Government higher secondary schools in Thiruvananthapuram Dist. Data were collected from 200 plus two students of science stream . By Simple random sampling technique, 100 students from each school were selected for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a modified version of Career questionnaire designed by Kohler P A and Edwards T A. Reliability of the tool was established by Cronbachs alpha using spss .Each student took 15-20 minutes for completing the questionnaire.

Results

Majority of students (73.5%) were in the age of 17yrs. Females (62%) were more in number as compared to males (38%). Study revealed that (44%) of subjects reported high school certificate for their fathers, (45%) of subjects had mothers with pre degree level education. Majority (29.5%) of the students reported that their father's were daily wages and majority (77.5%) of their mothers were house wives. Majority (43.5%) of the students belongs to the income range of below Rs 5000 per month. Majority (90.5%) of students were from nuclear family. Majority (51%) of the students were not having any relatives in nursing profession. In relation to previous academic performance majority (72.5%) of the students scored above 80%.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of students according to perception towards nursing profession

N=200

Sl no		Frequency		Percentage	
		Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
1	Perception	171	29	85.5%	14.5%

The findings of the perception towards nursing profession shows that majority (85.5%) of the students perceived nursing positively while a minority (14.5%) of them had negative perception towards nursing profession.

Table :2 Distribution of students considering nursing as a career choice

Sl.no	Character	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Definitely yes	20	10%
2.	Probably yes	22	11%
3.	May be	95	47.5%
4.	Probably not	28	14%
5.	Definitely not	35	17.5%

The students were asked " Are you considering nursing as your career choice?" To this question only 10% of students answered definitely yes, 11 % of them responded probably yes, 47.5% answered may be, 14.5% of them probably not and the remaining 17.5% of students answered definitely not.

Discussion

In the present study, 85.5% of higher secondary students perceived nursing positively, however only 10 % of students stated that they were definitely considering nursing as their career. This was supported by a study conducted by **H.T Dave (2007)** to evaluate the perceptions of the nursing image among high school students in selected higher secondary schools at Gujarat. The results showed that there was a positive attitude towards nursing among students. However, the positive attitude was not transmitted into a desire to join Nursing.

The findings were also consistent with another study conducted by **Al-Omar AB (2004)** among high school students in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of the study was to find out their knowledge, attitude and intention towards nursing profession. The results showed that students scored a reasonable level on the knowledge dimension; however they achieved very low scores on attitude and intention of being a nurse in the future. Only 5.2% preferred nursing as their future job.

There is a significant association found between perception and socio demographic variable occupation of the mother. Here the chi square value obtained is 29.88 which is found to be significant at $p < 0.05$ with $df = 3$. The other variables such as age of the students, gender, education of parents, monthly income of family, relatives in nursing profession, type of family and previous academic achievement are found to be non significant at $p > 0.05$.

This was supported by a cross-sectional study conducted among Dade County senior high school students by **Grossman and Northrop (1993)** and it was found that the occupations of students' mothers had a more significant impact on their choice of career than the occupations of their fathers

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