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FACTORS AFFECTING THE CAREER CHOICES OF NURSING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

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Objective: This study was conducted to determine the factors affecting the career choices of nursing students.

Methods: The population of this descriptive and cross-sectional study consisted of 1329 nursing students studying in the Department of Nursing during the Spring term of 2016-2017. A sample was not selected, and instead the whole population was studied. The study was completed with 776 nursing students (participation rate 58.3%). An ethics committee and board approvals were obtained prior to the study. The data was obtained using a Student Information Form, and the Nursing Career Decision Scale. The data was analyzed using independent samples t test, and a one-way ANOVA. Descriptive analyzes used were mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage.

Results: Percentage of 64.2 of the students reported "Low unemployment rate" as their career choice reason. The NCDS mean score of the students was 50.64 ± 15.30 , the mean scores for "congruence" and "survival/need" subscales were respectively 52.67 ± 19.90 , and 46.91 ± 16.40 . The statement "I have always wanted to help people" had the most important impact in career choices of the students with a score of 77.09 ± 25.37 . There was a significant difference between the NCDS mean scores and grade, gender, selecting the career willingly, order of preference, and the society's views towards the occupation ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The most important factor for the students for choosing the career was high employment rate, and the mean scores of the congruence subscale were higher than the scores of the survival/need subscale.

Keywords: Nursing, student, career choices

Abstract

Percentage of 64.2 of the students reported "Low unemployment rate" as their career choice reason. The NCDS mean score of the students was 50.64 ± 15.30 , the mean scores for "congruence" and "survival/need" subscales were respectively 52.67 ± 19.90 , and 46.91 ± 16.40 . The statement "I have always wanted to help people" had the most important impact in career choices of the students with a score of 77.09 ± 25.37 . There was a significant difference between the NCDS mean scores and grade, gender, selecting the career willingly, order of preference, and the society's views towards the occupation ($p < 0.05$).

Introduction and The Aim of This Study

Nursing is a profession dealing with human health which includes certain difficulties, and values occupational professionalism. Therefore, it is vital that young nurse candidates make conscious and intentional career choices and have positive occupational perceptions towards nursing which plays an important role in preserving and improving human health. Choosing nursing as an occupation unintentionally may result in many different situations that can harm healthy or ill individuals who receive nursing care. Therefore, investigating how nursing students make their career decisions and assessing the factors that affect their career choices result in conscious career decisions, and plays primarily an important role in improving the quality of nursing education, in training nurses who enjoy their occupation and do it voluntarily, in improving occupational satisfaction levels, in maintaining permanence, and secondarily, in improving patient satisfaction. This study aimed to assess the factors affecting career choices of nursing students.

Study Subject

Career choice is a complex process affected by multiple factors and is usually made relatively early during the adolescence period, when identity and personality searches and crises are experienced. Literature suggests that many individual and occupational factors affect career choices in nursing. Studies investigating nursing career choices have found that factors affecting students' choices to become a nurse have been for example low entrance scores, easy education, employment opportunities, adequate salary, good working conditions, being interested in the occupation, being suggested by someone else, and being considered prestigious by the society. This study contributes to the literature by making planning conscious career choice interventions possible by assessing career choice reasons and factors affecting these choices of nurse candidates.

Method

The population of this descriptive study consisted of 1329 nursing students studying in the department of nursing during the spring term of 2016-2017. A sample was not selected, and instead the whole population was studied. The study was completed with 776 nursing students (participation rate 58.3%). The data of the study was collected using a "Personal Information Form" developed by the researchers to gather socio-demographic information and characteristics related to the nursing profession, and a "Nursing Career Decision Scale", which investigates the reasons behind career choices.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study were in line with the literature, and the mean scores of the vocational congruency of the students were higher than the mean scores of survival scores. These findings suggest that vocational congruency reasons affected students' career choices more than survival reasons in choosing nursing as a career, and that the students primarily valued the occupation to be suitable for themselves. Literature suggests that high employment rate, and the belief that nurses will not be unemployed are additional reasons for choosing nursing. Majority of the students in our study expressed their reason to choose nursing since "There is no unemployment in nursing". This suggests that economic concerns are an important factor in choosing nursing as an occupation.

Nursing is a profession which includes helping and caring for people in its core and needs to be chosen consciously. Literature suggests that for nursing students, helping others plays an important role in choosing nursing as profession. The statement "I always wanted to help other people" had the highest score in our study with the mean score of 77.09 ± 25.37 , supporting this view. A pleasing finding was that most of the students chose nursing to help other people, suggesting that students have made the career choice intentionally while recognizing the fundamental responsibility of helping others.

Conclusions

The study found that the most important factor for the students for choosing nursing was high employment rate, the statement “I always wanted to help other people” had the most significant effect on career choice, and vocational congruency reasons were more effective than survival reasons. Therefore, to prevent students choosing the career path without being properly informed of its nature, and to provide professionalism in the occupation, as well as quality in care, organizing programs to students attending the university entrance exams that provide information regarding the occupation, is suggested.

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