

GENÇ HEMŞİRELERİN HEMŞİRELİK MESLEĞİ İMAJINA YÖNELİK ALGISI VE TERCİH NEDENLERİ

Associate Professor Sevgül DÖNMEZ, 0000-0003-2420-8167,

Prof. Dr. Nevin AKDOLUN BALKAYA, 0000-0003-2374-1541

Geliş Tarihi/Received

Kabul Tarihi/Accepted

Yayın Tarihi/Published

20.11.2020

04.07.2021

30.08.2021

Correspondence: Doç.Dr. Sevgül Dönmez, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi, Kadın Hastalıkları ve Doğum Hemşireliği Anabilim Dalı, donmezsevgul@gmail.com

ÖZET

Giriş

Hemşirelik mesleği, genç ve uygun niteliklere sahip öğrencileri, hemşirelik ve hemşirelik programlarında tutma becerisini etkileyen, imajla ilgili zorluklarla karşı karşıyadır. Kariyer seçen gençlerin meslekleri ile ilgili imaj ve algıları hakkında çok az şey bilinmektedir. Hemşire adaylarının, hemşirelik mesleğini ve imajını nasıl algıladıkları ve bu mesleği seçerken etkileyen faktörleri anlamak için daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyaç vardır.

Yöntem

Bu araştırma, hemşirelik öğrencilerin mesleğe yönelik imaj algılarının ve bu mesleği tercih etme nedenlerinin belirlenmesi amacıyla planlanmıştır. Bu tanımlayıcı çalışma, Mart–Haziran 2019 tarihleri arasında, Türkiye'nin güneybatısında yer alan bir devlet üniversitesinde okuyan 574 hemşirelik öğrencisiyle yapılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak; “Tanılama Formu” ve "Hemşirelik Mesleğine Yönelik İmaj Algısı Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, Hemşirelik Mesleğine Yönelik İmaj Algısı Ölçeği toplam puan ortalaması 149.76±10.51 (min=42, max=210) olarak bulunmuştur.

Bulgular

Öğrencilerin %63.9'u bu mesleği iş bulma kolaylığından, %21.4'ü ideali olduğu için ve %14.6'sı da ailesi istediği için tercih ettiğini ifade etmiştir. İdeali olduğu için bu mesleği tercih edenlerin, üç kez ve üzeri sınava girdikten sonra hemşireliği kazananların, bölümü tercih etmeden önce ailesinin ve kendisinin görüşü olumlu olanların, meslekle ilgili şuanadaki görüşü olumlu olanların, tercih etmeden önce meslek ile ilgili bilgi alanların ve bu bilgiyi sadece rehber öğretmenden alanların hemşireliğe yönelik imaj algısı puan ortalamaları daha yüksek bulunmuştur ($p<.05$).

Tartışma

Hemşirelik imajı çok önemli bir konu olmasına ve onu iyileştirmeye yönelik girişimlerde bulunulmasına rağmen hemşirelerin imajı hala istenilen düzeyde değildir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hemşire, Hemşirelik Öğrencileri, Genç Hemşire, Hemşirelik İmajı, Meslek Seçimi

YOUNG NURSES' CHOICE AND PERCEPTION OF THE IMAGE OF THE NURSING PROFESSION

ABSTRACT

Introduction

The nursing profession is faced with image-related challenges that affect the retention of young and appropriately qualified students in nursing profession and their participation in nursing programs. Little is known about young people's perceptions of the image of their profession when they choose a career. More information is needed to understand how nurses perceive the nursing profession and its image, and the factors that affect them when they choose the profession. It was planned to determine nursing students' perception of the image of the nursing profession and the reasons why they chose this profession.

Method

This descriptive study was conducted with 574 students studying between March-June 2019. Tools used for data collection were the "Information Form" and the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession.

Results

The mean score obtained from the Scale by the participants was 149.76 ± 10.51 . While 63.9% of the participating students chose this profession because it is easy to find a job as a nurse, 21.4% chose it because their ideal was to become a nurse and 14.6% chose it because their family wanted them to become a nurse.

Discussion

Although the image of nursing is so important an issue, and attempts to improve it have been made, the image of nurses is still not at the desired level.

Keywords: Nurse, Nursing Students, Young nurse, Image Of Nursing, Career Choice

INTRODUCTION

The professionalization of nurses through education and innovation has become the focus of one of the most outstanding and ongoing debates in the history of nursing. Nurses all over the world have become highly knowledgeable professionals in the light of nursing protocols and guidelines (1). Despite these advances towards professionalization, nurses are not adequately recognized for their skills, and they had to cope with problems related to the nursing profession and the image of nursing (2). However, in some parts of the world, the image of nurses is very positive, especially in cases which lead to a health crisis or pose a threat to health. Because in such cases, nurses, as independent practitioners, display a professional, warm and humorous approach towards families and the elderly while performing their tasks, they are recognized as the most ethical and honest professionals. However, this image is not always related to the notion how a good nurse should be (3). What is at the forefront is the traditional understanding that regards nursing as a virtuous profession within the altruistic, noble, affectionate and compassionate context. Since this approach depicts only the one dimension of the understanding of the nursing profession, it implies that traditional understanding is not enough to define a profession (4). On the contrary, there are such cases as setting of a nursing home on fire or assaulting of dementia patients by nurses, which causes people to have negative images about nursing (3).

The status of a profession is closely related to the public image of its members and is of great importance for the current and prospective members of the profession (5). Social and popular cultural images related to the nursing profession, and the messages given through anecdotes about nurses affect prospective nurses' career choice because image is a very important factor in

a person's professional life and affects his/her career development. Recognition of this image by nurses and prospective nurses is regarded as an important component of the recognition of nursing as a profession. The decision to choose the nursing profession and to stay in the nursing profession could be the result of the perception of the image of nursing (6). Furthermore, in places where the image of nursing is presented as negative and incorrect, prospective nurses will not be willing to choose the nursing profession as a career. What is more, patients will consider nursing worse than other professions and have a narrow view about what nurses actually do (3).

Young and dynamic prospective nurses who will improve the status and prestige of the nursing profession face image-related challenges that affect their retention in nursing and participation in nursing programs. However, despite the use of many professional socialization strategies, there is evidence that student nurses' negative perception of the image of nursing adversely affects student nurses and newly graduated qualified nurses. These issues pose a serious threat to the future of nursing (7). Although the image of nursing is so important an issue, and attempts to improve it have been made, the image of nurses is still not at the desired level. This is probably due to the fact that such efforts focus not on nurses' image of nursing but on the public image of nursing. The number of studies conducted on how the image of nursing is perceived by nurses and prospective nurses is limited (6). Little is known about how the image of the profession is perceived by young people who choose a career. More information is needed to understand how nurses perceive the nursing profession and its image, and the factors that affect it when they choose nursing as a profession (8).

Background

The concept of profession is generally defined as a body of activities which are performed to produce useful goods and service to earn money in return, acquired through education, and based on systematic knowledge and skills, and whose rules are established by the public (9). Nursing is an applied health discipline that includes theoretical knowledge and skills, and aims to define and meet the current and possible physiological and psychosocial needs of an individual, family and society through a holistic and humanistic approach (10). The profession should be perceived not only as a means of earning money, but also as a means of using skills, self-realization and self-improvement (11). The status of a profession is closely related to the public image of its members and is of great importance for its members. While the concept of image is to positively express who we are and what we can offer to others, and to react in accordance with the responses we receive, the professional image is the evaluation of a group by the community and the widespread acceptance of these values. The image of each profession is of great importance for its members. In general, image is known to play an important role in the factors affecting the professionalization of nursing which has a 100-150 year history in the world (5,12-13). Image, an inseparable part of the profession, not only is a factor affecting nurses' job satisfaction and professional activities but also plays a dominant role in students' career choice (14).

People's having a positive self-image is the basis of a successful image. How people perceive themselves is important in terms of the image they project. Having a negative view of the future of a profession leads to unhappiness in the professional life, and increases the sense of burnout and the number of people leaving the profession. Prospective nurses who look to the future of nursing with hope and will serve the society having understood what nursing is will also be effective in changing the society's negative perceptions of nursing. Therefore, it is important to know both the changes in nurses' and prospective nurses' perceptions of the image of nursing and their views on the roles and future of nursing (5, 15-16). The change in the individual thoughts and beliefs of nurses will first change their self-image and then their professional performances. If the self-image of nurses can be improved, the success and image of the profession can be improved too because the image of nursing is influenced by the beliefs and thoughts of nurses (17).

Having a positive image of nursing plays an important role in increasing nurses' job satisfaction and revealing their professional success and activities. In order to ensure the improvement of the nursing profession, there is a need for qualified nurses who love and embrace nursing, and assume responsibility and display a professional attitude when performing their professional care practices. This need will be met by undergraduate students who are the prospective members of nursing. Therefore, studies revealing student nurses' perceptions of the image of the nursing profession and their reasons to choose nursing as a profession are of importance (13, 17-19). Studies conducted with nursing students have revealed that the image of nursing is affected by the society's perspective of nursing (20-21). The foundations of adopting nursing and practicing it professionally, in other words, the foundations of the professional awareness are laid during school years, and continue throughout the person's professional life. Individuals who choose their professions lovingly and willingly perceive their professions as positive and thus they can lead a happier and more peaceful professional life (22). In our country, Turkey, most of the time, a person chooses a profession without knowing what it is like and without taking into account what his/her wishes and abilities are. In Turkey, among the factors influencing students to choose nursing as a career are "the ease of finding a job", "attending university", and "not to wait one more year to go to university". Those who choose nursing to improve it and its status should take into account their individual interests, wishes and abilities, be knowledgeable about nursing, and accept and love it as a profession (18, 23-24). If the image of nursing is to be improved, then students' perspectives of nursing should be carefully evaluated and their awareness about the importance of professional image should be raised (25).

Understanding how nursing students perceive their future professional roles and images is an important step in raising awareness of diversities and similarities between countries. Investigating nurse students' perceptions of their prospective profession can help design education, and contribute to the retention of nurses in the profession. Therefore, this study is important because it is expected to hearten prospective nurses to consider nursing as a lifelong career.

Purpose of the study

This study was designed to determine nursing students' perception of the image of the nursing profession and the reasons why they chose this profession.

Research Questions

- (1) What is prospective nurses' perception of the image of the nursing profession like?
- (2) What are the reasons for prospective nurses to choose this profession?

METHOD

Design

The study was a cross-sectional descriptive study.

Sample

The present study was conducted with 574 nursing students. The sample size was calculated using the sample size determination formula for known population.²⁶ Of the 650 questionnaires administered to the participants, 14 were returned incomplete, because 62 students did not want to participate in the study (The response rate was 88.3%).

Setting

The study was conducted with nursing students studying at a state university located in southwest Turkey between March - June 2019.

Instruments

The Information Form and the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession were used as data collection tools.

The Information Form: The form developed by the researchers in line with the literature comprises 18 items questioning the participants' socio-demographic characteristics such as age, income status and their reasons to choose the nursing profession (9,14).

Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession: The permission to use the scale in the present study was obtained from Dost and Bahçecik who developed it to assess the perception of the image of the nursing profession via e-mail. The scale consists of six sub-dimensions: professional qualifications, working conditions, gender, education, professional status, and appearance. The items of the scale are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 point (strongly disagree) to 5 points (strongly agree). The items 8, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 31 are negatively keyed items. The lowest and highest possible scores to be obtained from the scale are 42 and 210 respectively. While a total score of 42-75 indicates that the perception of image is very weak, 76-109 indicates it is weak, 110-143 indicates it is moderate, 144-177 indicates it is good and 178-210 indicates it is very good. The scale was reported to have high validity and reliability and to be adequate to determine attitudes towards nursing image. The higher the score is, the more favorable the perception of the image is (5).

Procedure

The participants were asked to complete the “Informed Consent Form”, Information Form” and the scale after they were informed about purpose of the study, and told that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The data collection tools were administered to the participating students between April 2019 and June 2019. It took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to fill in the data collection tools. The participants filled in the data collection tools individually.

Ethical consideration

Before the study was conducted, necessary permissions were obtained from the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Ethics Committee of Scientific Research (Decision No: 68). The participants were informed about the research and then the informed written consent was obtained from those who agreed to participate. To use the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession in the study, permission was obtained from the authors of the scale.

Data Analysis

The research findings were analyzed using the SPSS version 22.0. While the categorical variables were given as numbers and percentages, the continuous variables were given as arithmetic mean and standard deviation. To determine whether the data had normal distribution, Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used. The t test was used to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The results were evaluated at a 95% confidence interval and a significance level of $p < .05$.

RESULTS

Mean Scores for the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession

The mean score the participants obtained from the overall Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession was 149.76 ± 10.51 (min=42, max=210) . The mean scores the participants obtained from the subscales of the scale were as follows: 47.21 ± 4.14 (min = 11, max = 55) for the professional qualifications, 26.50 ± 2.95 (min = 10, max = 50) for the working conditions, 25.91 ± 5.55 (min = 8, max = 40) for the gender, 19.81 ± 2.07 (min = 5, max = 25) for the education, 18.45 ± 4.76 (min = 5, max = 25) for the professional status and 11.84 ± 2.76 (min = 3, max = 15) for the appearance subscales (Table 1).

Table 1. Mean Scores for the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession (N=574)

| İtems | Mean±SD | Min-Max Values of the Scale | Min-Max Values of Participants |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Professional Qualifications | 47.21±4.14 | 11-55 | 11-52 |
| Working Conditions | 26.50±2.95 | 10-50 | 17-39 |

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Gender | 25.91±5.55 | 8-40 | 11-39 |
| Education | 19.81±2.07 | 5-25 | 8-25 |
| Professional Status | 18.45±4.76 | 5-25 | 5-25 |
| Appearance | 11.84±2.76 | 3-15 | 3-15 |
| Total | 149.76±10.51 | 42-210 | 96-178 |

*p<.05.

The Analysis of the Mean Scores Obtained by the Participants from the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession in Terms of Their Socio-Demographic Characteristics

While there was a statistically significant correlation between the mean score for the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession and the variable “the year at school” ($p < .05$), the correlation between the mean score for the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession and the variables such as the participants’ age, marital status, income status, longest place of residence, smoking / alcohol use and mother’s / father’s education level, and the high school they graduated from was not statistically significant ($p > .05$) (Table 2).

Table 2. The Analysis of the Mean Scores Obtained by the Participants from the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession in Terms of Their Socio-Demographic Characteristics

| Variables | n | % | Mean±SD | |
|-------------------------------|-----|------|--------------|--------------------|
| Ages group (years) | | | | |
| 18-20 | 236 | 41.4 | 150.85±10.66 | F=2.988 p=.051 |
| 21-23 | 298 | 51.6 | 148.73±10.18 | |
| 24 and over | 40 | 7.0 | 151.00±11.45 | |
| Class | | | | |
| 1.class | 144 | 25.4 | 151.91±10.48 | F=3.066 p=.028* |
| 2.class | 136 | 23.5 | 148.30±10.88 | |
| 3.class | 167 | 29.0 | 149.23±10.86 | |
| 4.class | 127 | 22.1 | 149.60±9.33 | |
| Graduated high school | | | | |
| Normal highschool | 128 | 22.2 | 148.87±10.46 | F=1.067 p=.363 |
| Health vocational high School | 32 | 5.6 | 150.41±8.74 | |
| Anatolian High School | 376 | 65.5 | 149.76±10.77 | |
| Science High School | 38 | 6.7 | 152.26±9.18 | |
| Marital Status | | | | |
| Single | 561 | 97.7 | 149.74±10.54 | t=-.375 p=.707 |
| Married | 13 | 2.3 | 150.85±9.37 | |
| Income status | | | | |
| Good | 135 | 23.7 | 151.12±9.14 | F=2.335 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------|--------------|--------------------|
| Middle | 362 | 63.0 | 149.65±10.71 | p=.098 |
| Bad | 77 | 13.3 | 147.92±11.54 | |
| Longest place of residence | | | | |
| Province | 245 | 42.5 | 149.24±10.26 | F=.621 p=.538 |
| District | 233 | 40.7 | 150.31±10.77 | |
| Town / village | 96 | 16.7 | 149.78±10.52 | |
| Smoking | | | | |
| Yes | 168 | 29.3 | 149.86±10.38 | t=.147 p=.884 |
| No | 406 | 70.7 | 149.72±10.57 | |
| Alcohol use | | | | |
| Yes | 186 | 32.4 | 148.89±10.16 | t=-1.861 p=.063 |
| No | 388 | 67.4 | 150.33±10.64 | |
| Mother's education level | | | | |
| Not literate | 87 | 14.9 | 147.59±11.9 | F=1.504 p=.213 |
| Primary school | 269 | 47.0 | 150.05±10.63 | |
| Middle School | 113 | 19.8 | 150.42±10.39 | |
| High School and above | 105 | 18.3 | 150.11±8.88 | |
| Father's education level | | | | |
| Not literate | 43 | 7.5 | 149.67±11.25 | F=.320 p=.811 |
| Primary school | 241 | 42.1 | 150.19±10.64 | |
| Middle School | 121 | 21.1 | 149.80±10.75 | |
| High School and above | 169 | 29.3 | 149.15±10.00 | |

*p<.05

The Analysis of the Mean Scores Obtained by the Participants from the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession in Terms of the Reasons for Choosing Nursing

There was a statistically significant correlation between the mean score for the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession and the variables such as the reasons for choosing nursing, the participant's and his / her family's opinion to choose nursing, the participant's current opinion about nursing profession, obtaining information about the nursing profession before choosing it, and the source of the information about nursing ($p < .05$); however, the correlation between the mean score for the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession and the variables such as how many times the participant took the university entrance exam to be accepted to the nursing department and which place nursing takes in the participant's preference list (in Turkey, a student who passes the university entrance exam makes a list of schools indicating which school he/she prefers first and so on) was not statistically significant (Table 3).

Table 3. The Analysis of the Mean Scores Obtained by the Participants from the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession in Terms of the Reasons for Choosing Nursing

| Variables | n | % | Mean±SD | |
|--|-----|------|--------------|---------------------|
| How many times the participant took the university entrance exam to be accepted to the nursing department | | | | |
| 1. | 352 | 61.3 | 149.63±10.02 | F=.093 p=.911 |
| 2. | 173 | 30.2 | 149.90±11.22 | |
| 3. and over | 49 | 8.6 | 150.24±11.47 | |
| Which place nursing takes in the participant's preference list | | | | |
| Top 5 preferences | 329 | 57.3 | 149.84±10.26 | F=2.562 p=.078 |
| 6-10 preferred | 153 | 26.9 | 150.84±10.69 | |
| 11 and over | 92 | 15.8 | 147.72±10.89 | |
| Reason for choosing nursing | | | | |
| Ease of finding a job | 368 | 63.9 | 149.34±10.82 | F=5.331 p=.005* |
| My ideal | 121 | 21.4 | 152.35±8.91 | |
| My family's request | 85 | 14.6 | 147.93±10.71 | |
| Family's opinion to choose nursing | | | | |
| Positive | 355 | 62.2 | 150.57±10.16 | F=3.824 p=.010* |
| Partly positive | 127 | 22.0 | 148.96±10.66 | |
| Immortal | 42 | 7.1 | 145.05±12.83 | |
| He had no opinion | 550 | 8.7 | 150.06±9.44 | |
| Opinion about the profession when choosing nursing department | | | | |
| Positive | 222 | 39.4 | 152.57±9.80 | F=19.382 p=.001* |
| Partly positive | 246 | 42.7 | 149.20±10.13 | |
| Immortal | 106 | 17.9 | 145.21±11.08 | |
| Current opinion about nursing profession | | | | |
| Positive | 263 | 46.8 | 152.91±9.52 | F=37.412 p=.001* |
| Partly positive | 238 | 41.2 | 148.68±9.81 | |
| Immortal | 73 | 12.1 | 141.96±11.40 | |
| Obtaining information about the nursing profession before choosing it | | | | |
| Yes | 450 | 78.4 | 150.60±9.55 | t=3.653 p=.001* |
| No | 124 | 21.6 | 146.74±13.03 | |
| Source of the information about nursing (n=450)^a | | | | |
| Family only | 50 | 11.3 | 152.84±8.72 | F=2.915 p=.002* |
| Family + nurse | 23 | 5.1 | 151.04±8.94 | |
| Family+environment | 13 | 3.0 | 155.31±8.44 | |
| Family + guidance teacher | 3 | 0.7 | 149.67±17.47 | |
| Nurse only | 93 | 20.5 | 149.17±9.82 | |
| Nurse + environment | 40 | 8.9 | 151.48±9.11 | |
| Nurse + guidance teacher | 13 | 2.9 | 152.77±10.77 | |
| Internet and environment only | 84 | 18.3 | 147.56±10.43 | |

| | | | |
|---|----|------|-------------|
| Internet and environment + guidance counselor | 36 | 7.9 | 149.00±7.76 |
| Only guidance counselor | 26 | 6.0 | 156.19±8.31 |
| After all | 69 | 15.4 | 151.39±8.64 |

*p<.05. ^a Only students receiving information are included.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, prospective nurses' perception of the image of the nursing profession and the reasons why they chose this profession were investigated. Image is a very important factor in one's professional life and career development. Nurses' and prospective nurses' being aware of this image is considered as an important component of recognition of the nursing profession (6). In the current study, the prospective nurses' perception of the image of the nursing profession was at a good level. Similarly, in Özdelikara et al.'s study conducted with the 4th grade students in nursing and non-nursing departments, the students' perception of the image of nursing was good. The development of legal regulations and the increase in the number of graduates in the nursing profession have contributed to the improvement of the students' perception of the image of nursing in the historical process. On the other hand, in Turkey, unfortunately the society still has negative perceptions about the image of the nursing profession, which is a factor that affects nursing students' perceptions of the image of nursing adversely (27). In the literature, although there are studies conducted with nursing students and showing that public image of nursing is positive, there are some other studies indicating that it is negative (20-21, 28).

Career choice, the starting point of the career development process, plays an important role in an individual's life. An individual's career choice can be influenced by various factors such as his/her socio-demographic characteristics, the status of the profession in the society, job opportunities, his/her ability regarding the profession and his/her interest in the profession (29-30). Choosing the nursing profession may be the result of perception of the image of nursing. In this study, it was found that the nurses who chose this profession because of their ideal perception of nursing profession was higher. However, in the present study, the participating prospective nurses were more likely to prefer nursing because of the economic and job opportunities of nursing. Our results are consistent with those in the literature (31-33). One reason behind this is that the majority of students who prefer nursing have low-income families or low socio-economic background (24). In the current study, only one fourth of the participants considered their income status as good and those who considered their income status as poor had a less favorable perception of image of nursing than did the others.

For students to make conscious career choices, and to adapt to the department they are studying and to the profession they will carry out after graduation are of great importance if their perception of the image of nursing is to be favorable. In the present study, nursing was not in the

first five places in the preference list of approximately half of the students. In our study, that nursing was not at the top of the preference list of the participating prospective nurses did not affect their scores for the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession was an expected result. In their study, Neilson and Jones found that more than one third of nursing students did not choose nursing as their first career choice and that they preferred nursing because they did not have sufficient academic qualification to be accepted to the courses in other departments they wanted to choose (34).

People's having a positive image of themselves is the basis of a successful image. In the current study, the students who had a positive opinion about nursing before they chose it as a career obtained higher mean scores from the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession. Having a positive attitude towards nursing before choosing it as a career enables individuals to carry out nursing as the way it deserves, which not only makes those working in nursing get satisfaction from the service they provide and but also provides benefit and satisfaction for those receiving the service. Nursing students studying in a department they have chosen unwillingly or having a negative perception of that department are unlikely to be successful and productive in their profession (32). It is assumed that those who choose a profession because it is their ideal are more knowledgeable about the profession, and that they have already had the perception of the image of the profession which is normally acquired during the education process before entering the relevant department (23). In our study, of the participants, those who preferred nursing profession because it was their ideal had a more favorable perception of the image of nursing, consistent with the literature results. In order to choose the ideal occupation, it is necessary for a person to analyze job opportunities, to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the relevant sector, to find out the professional experiences of those working in that sector, and to determine whether that profession is suitable for him/her before making career planning (9).

Career choice and career planning are a difficult process and are influenced by many factors. Parents, guidance counselors and career counselors play an important role in shaping the career choices of prospective nurses. In particular, guidance counselors have been found to have a significant influence on the career choices of students (34). In our study, those who received information about nursing from a guidance counselor before choosing it and those whose parents displayed a positive attitude towards choosing nursing profession obtained higher scores from the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession. For a candidate to adopt a profession, he/she is expected not only to choose it willingly, but also to maintain his/her willing throughout his/her education. In the present study, most of the participants had favorable opinions of nursing, and those who had favorable opinions of nursing obtained higher mean scores from the Scale for the Image of Nursing Profession. In Temel et al.'s study, 70.7% of the students were pleased to be a nurse, and there was a correlation between the mean scores for the occupational suitability and their being pleased to be a nurse (24). The relationship between perception, and attitude and behavior is one of the most important relationships that should be focused on in the organizational life. Individuals develop attitudes in parallel with their perception, and tend to behave in parallel with their attitudes. The image of a profession can be assumed to be the sum

of the perceptions of a profession. Therefore, it is thought that the perception of the image of a profession would first turn into attitude and then to a behavior, which will affect the person's intention to stay in the profession and commitment to the profession. In order for students who want to prefer nursing as a profession to make conscious and correct decisions, universities' and health institutions' providing support for them and their families and informing them that nursing is a profession by taking all its aspects into account is important.

Limitation

There are some limitations to the study. The research was a cross sectional study. Therefore, it contains the limitations of a cross sectional research. It is not free from recall biases. There is a potential response bias. There is also a selection bias as the study included only the volunteers. It is only effective when it represents the entire population. The sample included only 1 school and 574 students; therefore, its results cannot be generalized.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study indicated that the participating prospective nurses' perception of the image of nursing was at a good level, and the ease of finding a job was the leading factor to choose nursing as a profession. In the light of the results of the study, it is thought that in particular, academic nurses and clinical nurses, who play an important role in education and clinical practices performed to raise awareness, will be a role model and provide guidance to improve the image of nursing. A positive image is important for the implementation and fulfillment of the profession in order to advance the nursing profession and to increase its status. Therefore, those who choose nursing should make a conscious choice, should be highly knowledgeable about nursing, and should accept and love it. For this purpose, prospective nurses should be provided with sufficient information about nursing, and the source of their wrong, incomplete information about the choice of profession should be determined. Then, it may become possible to make nursing a preferred profession by taking necessary measures to improve the image of nursing profession.

REFERENCES

1. Hoeve, Y., Jansen, G., & Roodbol, P. The nursing profession: public image, self-concept and professional identity. A discussion paper. *J Adv Nurs*. 2014;70(2):295-309.
2. Cukljek, S., Juresa, V., & Babic, J. The cross-cultural (transcultural) adaptation and validation of the nursing image questionnaire. *Nurse Educ Today*. 2017;48:67-71.
3. Tuckett, A., Kim H., & Huh, J. Image and message: Recruiting the right nurses for the profession. A qualitative study. *Nurse Educ Today*. 2017;55:77-81.
4. Price, S. L., McGillis Hall, L., Angus, J. E., & Peter, E. Choosing nursing as a career: a narrative analysis of millennial nurses' career choice of virtue. *Nursing Inquiry*. 2013;20(4): 305-316.

5. Dost, A., & Bahçecik, A.N. Developing a scale for the image of nursing profession. *JAREN*. 2015;1(2):51-59.
6. Emeghebo, L. The image of nursing as perceived by nurses. *Nurse Education Today*. 2012;32: e49–e53.
7. Chauke, M.E., Van Der Wal, D., & Botha, A. Using appreciative inquiry to transform student nurses' image of nursing. *Curationis*. 2015;19;38(1).
8. Glerean, N., Hupli, M., Talman, K., & Haavisto, E. Young peoples' perceptions of the nursing profession: An integrative review. *Nurse Educ Today*. 2017;57:95-102.
9. Kızığüt, S., & Ergöl, Ş. Health colleges students' perceptions of nursing and their views on nursing roles and the future of nursing. *Anadolu Hemşirelik ve Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*. 2011;14(2): 10-5.
10. Nazik, E., & Arslan, S. The future of nursing: the hopes of students. *Bozok Tıp Dergisi*. 2014;4 (1): 33-40.
11. Atasoy, I., & Ermin, Ç. An Investigation on the professional perspectives of the nursing and midwifery students. *Düzce Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*. 2016;6 (2): 83-91.
12. Eşer, İ., Orkun, N., & Çetin, P. The image of nursing and a series of advertisements published in the 1950s *DEUHFED*. 2017;10(4):275-278.
13. Hoeve, Y., Jansen, G., & Roodbol, P. The nursing profession:public image, self-concept and professional identity. *A Discussion Paper Journal of Advanced Nursing*.2013;70(2):295–309.
14. Kızılcık et al. Professional image perception of a group of nursing students. *Turkish Journal of Research & Development in Nursing*. 2017;19(1):38-47.
15. Neishabouri, M., Ahmadi, F., & Kazemnejad, A. Iranian nursing students' perspectives on transition to professional identity: a qualitative study. *Int Nurs Rev*. 2017;64(3):428-436.
16. Vlieghe et al. The professional selfimage of registered home nurses in Flanders (Belgium): A cross-sectional questionnaire survey. *Applied Nursing Research*. 2011;24(1):29-36.
17. Dönmez, S., & Karakuş, E. Investigation of professional commitment of the newly graduated nurses. *Kocaeli Med J*. 2019;8 (1):146-152.
18. Özdemir, F.K., & Şahin, Z.A. Factors affecting the career choices of first year nursing students. *Acibadem University Health Sciences Journal*. 2016;1:28-32.
19. Sis Çelik, A., Pasinlioğlu, T., Kocabeyoğlu, T., & Çetin, S. Determination of the image of nursing profession in community. *F N Hem Derg*. 2013;21(3):147-153.
20. Andsoy, I., Güngör, T., & Bayburtoğlu, T. Karabuk university health school students' thoughts about the future of their profession and the causes of preferring nursing. *Balıkesir Sağlık Bil Derg*. 2012;1(1):124-130.
21. İnce, S., & Khorshid, L. Hemşirelik öğrencilerinin ve meslek seçimini etkileyen faktörlerin belirlenmesi. *Anadolu Hemşirelik ve Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*. 2015;18(3):163-71.

22. Yılmaz, F.T., Şen, H.T., & Demirkaya, F. 2014. Job perception patterns of nurses and midwives and their expectations for the future. *Journal of Health and Nursing Management*. 3(1):130-139.
23. Sarıtaş, S.C., Derin, N., & Sarıtaş, S. The effect of professional image perception on intention of staying profession at nursing students. *Inonu University Journal of Health Sciences*. 2014;3(1): 29-32.
24. Temel, M., Bilgiç Ş., & Çelikkalp Ü. 2018. Effective factors in the career choice of nursing students. *Journal of Higher Education and Science*. 8(3):480-487.
25. Achilles, K. Image of nursing profession as viewed by secondary school students in ilala district. *Dar Es Salaam. Medical Students' Journal*. 2010;9(1):12-16.
26. Karatas, N. Sampling research. Erefe I, editor. *Nursing Research Principles, Process and Methods*. 3.Print. Ankara: Focus Offset. 2004.
27. Özdelikara, A., Boğa, N., & Çayan, N. Nursing image from the view of nursing students and other section students. *Düzce Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*. 2015;5(2):1-5.
28. Sarıkaya, T., & Khorshid, L. Üniversite öğrencilerinin meslek seçimini etkileyen etmenlerin incelenmesi: üniversite öğrencilerinin meslek seçimi. *Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*.2009;7(2):393-423.
29. Çelik, N., & Üzmez, U. Evaluation of university students' affecting factors choice of profession. *EJOIR*. 2014;2:64-105.
30. Wu et al. Why not nursing? A systematic review of factors influencing career choice among healthcare students. *International Nursing Review*. 2015;62(4):547-562.
31. Erkal, İ.S., Yalçın, A.S., & Sancar, B. Ankara university faculty of health sciences students' reasons for selecting midwifery and nursing divisions. *Ankara Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*. 2012;73-89.
32. Özveren, H., Gülnar, E., & Özden, D. Determination of the factors that affect the choice of career of the nursing students. *Turk J Clin Lab*. 2017;8(2):57-64.
33. Zamanzadeh et al. Choosing and remaining in nursing: Iranian male nurses' perspectives. *Contemporary Nurse*. 2013;45(2):220-227.
34. Neilson, G.R., & Jones, M.C. What predicts the selection of nursing as a career choice in 5th and 6th year school students? *Nurse Educ Today*. 2012;32(5):588-93.