

Research Article

## Perception of Nursing Profession among International Nursing Students

### Uluslararası Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinin Hemşirelik Mesleği Algısı

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#### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to explore perceptions of the nursing profession and the factors that influence them.

**Methods:** This descriptive study on the perception of the nursing profession among international students had a sample of 212 people, and the data were collected via an online survey in the second week of February 2023 and lasted 30 days. The data were collected using the Descriptive Information Form and the Nurses' Professional Values Scale-3, which were prepared by the researcher based on literature. In the statistical analysis of the data, the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 24.0 for Windows Evaluation package program was used, and arithmetic mean, number and percentage, Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis Variance Analysis methods were used.

**Results:** It was determined that 56.1% (n=119) of the participants were female and 48.1% (n=102) of the participants were between 21-25 years of age. When the marital status of the participants was analyzed, it was found that 87.7% (n=186) were single. In this study, the mean score of the Professional Values Scale of student nurses was 88.90±11.02, indicating that the majority of students had a positive perspective towards the nursing profession.

**Conclusions:** Based on the current study, nursing students generally had good perspectives toward the nursing profession. The research findings indicate that the attitudes of the participants towards the nursing profession were influenced by various factors, including gender, marital status and family status.

**Keywords:** Nursing Profession, Nursing Student, Perception

#### ÖZ

**Amaç:** Bu çalışmanın amacı uluslararası hemşirelik öğrencileri arasında hemşirelik mesleğine ilişkin algıyı araştırmak ve onların görüşlerini etkileyen faktörleri belirlemektir.

**Yöntem:** Uluslararası öğrencilerde hemşirelik mesleği algısına yönelik tanımlayıcı bir çalışma olan bu araştırmanın örneklemi 212 kişi olup veriler Şubat 2023'ün ikinci haftasında çevrimiçi anket aracılığıyla toplanmış ve 30 gün sürmüştür. Veriler, araştırmacı tarafından literatüre dayanarak hazırlanan Tanımlayıcı Bilgi Formu ve Hemşirelerin Mesleki Değerleri Ölçeği-3 aracılığı ile toplanmıştır. Verilerin istatistiksel analizinde, Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 24.0 for Windows Evaluation paket programı kullanılmış ve aritmetik ortalama, sayı ve yüzdelik, Mann Whitney U testi ve Kruskal Wallis Varyans Analiz yöntemlerinden yararlanılmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Katılımcıların %56,1'inin (n=119) kadın olduğu, %48,1'inin (n=102) 21-25 yaş aralığında olduğu belirlendi. Katılımcıların medeni durumları incelendiğinde %87,7'sinin (n=186) bekar olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu çalışmada öğrenci hemşirelerin Mesleki Değerler Ölçeği puanı ortalaması 88,90±11,02 olup öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğunun hemşirelik mesleğine karşı olumlu bir bakış açısına sahip olduğunu göstermektedir.

**Sonuç:** Mevcut çalışmaya göre hemşirelik öğrencilerinin genel olarak hemşirelik mesleğine yönelik olumlu bakış açıları vardı. Araştırma bulguları, katılımcıların hemşirelik mesleğine yönelik tutumlarının cinsiyet, medeni durum ve aile durumu gibi çeşitli faktörlerden etkilendiğini göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Algı, Hemşirelik Mesleği, Hemşirelik Öğrencisi

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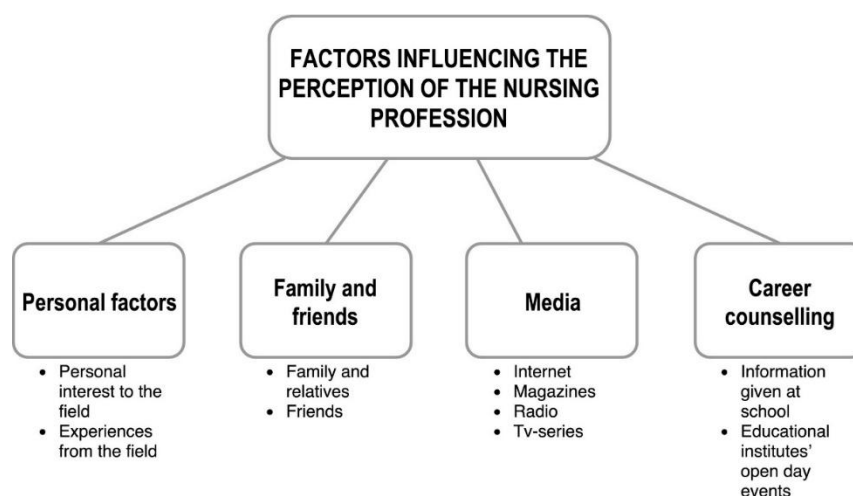
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## INTRODUCTION

The nursing profession is a professional health field that works with individual, family, and community health and was created by society to address health needs. The moral and ethical commitments that nurses have to their patients, communities, profession, employers, and themselves are founded on the values they defend; Consequently, a profession's social or public impression is an important component of professional identity. In general, nursing is acknowledged by society as a legitimate healthcare profession (Hoeve et al., 2014). Therefore, evaluating the world view of nursing students to determine the values and attitudes of students towards the nursing profession, shows how successful and satisfied they will be in the field and help advance efforts to develop and improve the nursing profession. Nursing provide comprehensive care to people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds, both healthy and ill, based on their physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, social, and spiritual requirements. Nurses can also improve their personal, professional, psychological, and social lives (Kathreena et al., 2019). The nursing profession has changed tremendously in recent years. With advancement of science and technology, the amount of knowledge has increased overtime. Even though the nursing profession has undergone significant changes, student's perception of the profession remain unchanged (Aruna et al., 2019).

Nursing profession focuses toward providing healthcare services to individuals, families, and communities to help them achieve, maintain, and to recover their maximum health and quality life. The attitudes of nurses toward caring for patients and the nature of their work may distinguish them apart from other healthcare providers. (James et al., 2017). Nursing, according to Florence Nightingale, is the process of bringing the healthy and those who are ill to a state where nature can operate to preserve health, prevent sickness and harm, restore health, and cure disease. Values have a great influence on the formation and change of a person's attitude towards a situation (Bektas & Nalcaci, 2012).

Nurses are the majority of healthcare professionals (59%) and play a crucial role in providing safe and effective treatment (Wilson et al., 2020). How health-care professionals and society perceive nursing determines how much room the profession has for growth (Başkale & Serçekuş, 2015). The image of the profession is influenced by various social and environmental factors, including gender, misconceptions, preconceptions, family, individual experiences, and media (Turan & Atasoy, 2021).



**Figure 1.** Nursing Applicants' Perception of the Nursing Profession (Glerean et al., 2019)

The attitudes of nursing students toward health care teams in the setting of a variety of multidisciplinary learning experiences have been studied in the health care literature, with conflicting and contradictory results. Nursing and other healthcare students' views toward teamwork have been compared in certain studies. (Aleshire et al., 2019).

The vision of students towards the Nursing profession only comprises the bedside care and administration of medication overshadowing the highly skilled and well-qualified nurses with a significant role to play in the healthcare field. This is because most of the students run from their precious time with that of the nursing professional or might have never volunteered in the backbone of healthcare, and is in vain without the required informed career decision-making qualities (Navarra et al., 2018).

A crucial part of the healthcare system is nursing. Effective nursing education helps to strengthen the health system by preparing knowledgeable professionals who can recognize individual and societal health (Saleh, 2018).

The purpose of this research is to discover nursing students' perceptions toward the nursing profession and their understanding of clinical and theoretical aspects of Near East University. This study will raise awareness toward the perception of the nursing profession among nursing students of the Near East University. The result of this study will also assist in reinforcing the theoretical and clinical aspects of nursing and will add to the existing literature to be assessed by scholars.

## METHODS

### Design

This study type used a cross-sectional descriptive study to determine undergraduate students' perceptions and perceptions of the nursing profession as a career choice. In this research, the participants are undergraduates Near East University of Nursing Sciences English program in years 1 to 4. The questionnaire was created and distributed online with a focus on social media places where Near East University's faculty of nursing students frequently hang out in the TRNC. In the case of nursing student's perceptions of the profession during their course education, focus on the meaning of their lived experiences and how individuals see their world in their given context (Polit & Beck, 2010). This was measured using the Weis and Schank Nurses Professional Values Scale (NPVS).

### Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The population of the study comprises the total population of undergraduate English-speaking students of the nursing department. The students present who volunteer to partake in the surveys constitute the accessible population of this study, it was estimated at 450 with a sample size of 212. The details of the number of samples are as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} n = \frac{450}{1+450(0.05)^2} n=212$$

### Data Collection

In this study, data was collected in the second week of February 2023 and lasted 30 days in 15 min via an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was created and distributed online to the study participants at Near East University, North Cyprus. The online survey was made with Google form, email addresses of the students as well as student groups on social media.

**Scale-3 NPVS-R:** The development of the Nurses Professional Values Scale-3 NPVS-R by Weis and Schank was incorporated into the design and testing of the NPVS-3 (Weis & Schank, 2000). This scale is a five-point Likert scale from 1 (agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) with 22 questions, and nurses use it to assess their professional values. Each NPVS-3 item is a brief descriptive phrase that reflects a single code provision and its interpretive commentary. All items are phrased positively; none is evaluated negatively. The possible scores range from 22 to 110. Higher scores in the scale indicate a stronger professional value orientation among the participants. Total scores are calculated by adding numerical replies to each

item. The internal consistency of the study instruments was tested using the Cronbach alpha coefficient method = 0.92, indicating a good degree of dependability.

**Descriptive Information Form:** Descriptive Information Form was developed by the researchers according to the literature and included the variables of sex, age, nationality, marital status, reasons for enrolment to the faculty of nursing, and family's reaction to student enrolment.

### Statistical Analysis

The research questionnaire will be evaluated using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0 software. Descriptive statistics are applied using numbers, percentages, and arithmetic mean, the standard deviation for the collection, analysis organization, interpretation, and presentation of data. The independent variables are composed of the students' sociodemographic results, the student's experience, and reasons for enrolling in the nursing profession. Whereby, the students' perception of nursing as a profession used as the dependent variable. Other statistical methods applied to gathered data include independent t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Chi-square, if the independent variable is in 2 categories, the Mann-Whitney T-test used, if more than 2 categories, the Kruskal-Wallis H test used. Results presented using tables, pie and bar charts relative to the different modalities of the questionnaire.

### Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the University Scientific Researches and Ethics Committee (YDU/2022/102-1544). Participation was voluntary and each participant accepted an informed consent before participation in the study.

### RESULTS

When Table 1 was analyzed, it was determined that 56.1% (n=119) of the participants were female, 43.9% (n=93) were male and 23% (n=50) were between 18-20 years of age, 48.1% (n=102) of the participants were between 21-25 years of age, 24.1% (n=51) were between 26-29 years of age and 4.2% (n=9) were 30 and above. 87.7% (n=186) were single and 12.3% (n=26) were married. 51.9% (n=110) were Nigerian, 26.9% (n=57) were Zimbabwean, 9.9% (n=21) were Ghanaian, 3.8% (n=8) were from Jordan while 7.5% (n=16) were of other nationalities. 50.5% (n=107) of them stated their beliefs as Christian. 43% (n=93) were Muslims and 5.7% (n=12) were of other beliefs.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Participants' Sociodemographic Characteristics (N=212)

| Variables             | n (Number) | % (Percentage) |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------|
| <b>Gender</b>         |            |                |
| Female                | 119        | 56.1           |
| Male                  | 93         | 43.9           |
| <b>Age group</b>      |            |                |
| 18-20                 | 50         | 23.6           |
| 21-25                 | 102        | 48.1           |
| 26-29                 | 51         | 24.1           |
| 30+                   | 9          | 4.2            |
| <b>Marital Status</b> |            |                |
| Single                | 186        | 87.7           |
| Married               | 26         | 12.3           |
| <b>Nationality</b>    |            |                |
| Nigeria               | 110        | 51.9           |
| Zimbabwe              | 57         | 26.9           |
| Ghana                 | 21         | 9.9            |
| Jordan                | 8          | 3.8            |
| Other                 | 16         | 7.5            |
| <b>Religion</b>       |            |                |
| Christian             | 107        | 50.5           |
| Muslim                | 93         | 43.9           |
| Other                 | 12         | 5.7            |

When Table 2 was analyzed, 33.5% (n=71) of the participants were in the fourth year, 25.5% (n=54) in the third year, 23.6% in the second year (n=50) and 17.5% (n=37) in the first year. When the reasons why the participants chose the nursing profession were analysed, it was determined that 42.0% (n=89) of them answered a desire to help, 21.7% (n=46) advised from family, 19.8% (n=42) was due to secondary school grade and advice from family, 16.5% (n=35). It was found that 77.8% (n=165) of the participants' families gave a positive reaction to their enrolment in nursing while 4.7% (n=10) gave a negative reaction with 17.5% (n=37) neutral. It was determined that 92% (n=194) of the participants had a nurse friend or relative and only 8% (n=7) without a nurse friend or relatives.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Participants' Educational Characteristics (N=212)

| Variables                                       | n (Number) | % (Percentage) |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| <b>Year at the University</b>                   |            |                |
| First                                           | 37         | 17.5           |
| Second                                          | 50         | 23.6           |
| Third                                           | 54         | 25.5           |
| Fourth                                          | 71         | 33.5           |
| <b>Reason for Selecting Nursing Education</b>   |            |                |
| Desire to Help                                  | 89         | 42.0           |
| Advice from family                              | 46         | 21.7           |
| Secondary School Grade and Advice from Family   | 42         | 19.8           |
| Final Reasons/Available Work and Desire to Help | 35         | 16.5           |
| <b>Family's Reaction to Student Enrolment</b>   |            |                |
| Positive                                        | 165        | 77.8           |
| Negative                                        | 10         | 4.7            |
| Natural                                         | 37         | 17.5           |
| <b>Having Nurse Friends and Relatives</b>       |            |                |
| Yes                                             | 195        | 92             |
| No                                              | 17         | 8              |

When Table 3 was analyzed, it was determined that while a minimum score of 22 points could be obtained from the NPVS-R scale, 67 points were obtained in this study, and while a maximum score of 110 points could be obtained, the

participants obtained a maximum score of 110 points in the study. When the table was analyzed, it was determined that a mean score of  $88.90 \pm 11.02$  was obtained from the scale.

**Table 3.** Mean Score of NPVS-R

| Scale Points |     | This Study |     | X± Sd       |
|--------------|-----|------------|-----|-------------|
| Min          | Max | Min        | Max |             |
| 22           | 110 | 67         | 110 | 88.90±11.02 |

Min: Minimum, Max: Maksimum, Sd: Standard deviation.

When Table 4 was analyzed, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between gender and marital status, but not a statistically significant difference between having a nurse friend or relative when compared to participant characteristics and NPVS-R scale scores.

**Table 4.** Comparison of Some Characteristics of the Participants with the NPVS-R

| Variables                         | U*      | p    |
|-----------------------------------|---------|------|
| Gender                            | 4550.50 | 0.02 |
| Marital Status                    | 1243.50 | 0.01 |
| Having a Nurse Friend or Relative | 1192.50 | 0.06 |

\*Mann–Whitney U statistic.

When Table 5 was analyzed, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the reason for selecting nursing education, nationality, and year at the university, while there was no statistically significant difference between age, religion, and family's reaction to student enrolment.

**Table 5.** Comparison of Some Characteristics of the Participants with the NPVS-R

| Variables                              | X <sup>2</sup> | p    |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|------|
| Age                                    | 2.44           | 0.48 |
| Religion                               | 4.69           | 0.09 |
| Reason for Selecting Nursing Education | 17.24          | 0.01 |
| Family's Reaction to Student Enrolment | 4.97           | 0.08 |
| Nationality                            | 19.19          | 0.01 |
| Year at the University                 | 12.76          | 0.01 |

X<sup>2</sup>: Chi-square.

## DISCUSSION

In this study the mean professional values scale NPVS-R score for student nurses is  $88.90 \pm 11.02$ , with a maximum score of 110 points which shows that majority of the students had a positive view towards the nursing profession. In the study performed by Geckil et al. (2012) reported a mean NPVS score of  $106.4 \pm 13.6$ . In a study by Alkaya et al. (2018) including Turkish and American nursing students, the mean NPVS score for the American students was  $101.6 \pm 17.0$ , whereas the mean score for the Turkish students was  $109.2 \pm 12.3$ . This finding was higher than that found in another study conducted at Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Vietnam, where only 62.07% of students expressed positive opinions regarding the nursing profession Mai et al. (2018). This could be attributed to the influence of family and friends on students who chose to study nursing despite having no goals or interest in working at a hospital. In contrast, students in this study were interested in nursing for a variety of reasons, including academic success. As a result, friends and family were not the only primary motivators for their decision to pursue a career in nursing.

The number of male respondents (Table 1), (42.9%) which is close to female respondents (56.1%) is an indication that males are entering the nursing profession. More males need to join the profession to change the current perception that nursing is a female profession. All participants stated that nursing is a noble profession and is consistent with Beck (2012),

who reported that nursing is a noble and well-regarded career.

When the reasons why the participants chose the nursing profession were analyzed, it was determined that 42.0% of them answered the desire to help. Since this is the highest, it is clear from the results obtained that the desire to help others has a significant impact on the student nurse's decision to study nursing as a career. The most convincing justification for choosing nursing as a career is still the idea of wanting to help others.

Similar results were found in a Swedish study by Jirwe and Rudman (2012), where 73.3% of nursing students said they chose the profession because they wanted to care for and help others, another study conducted in India by Patidar et al. (2011), where 99.1% of the respondents said that they chose nursing because it offered an opportunity to serve humanity. One of the top key factors under the category of “intrinsic attraction to nursing” is the ability to work closely with people ( $M=2.50$ ,  $SD=0.54$ ); This finding is further supported by Eley and Rogers (2010), where out of 17 items, “sense of giving to community” came fifth.

According to our research, perceptions are shaped by society, and friends and family play a significant influence in a nursing student's career decision which confirms our findings in Table 2, it was found that 77.8% of the participants' families gave a positive reaction to their enrolment in nursing.

Nursing students may be enrolling in nursing schools in reaction to their parents' aspirations rather than their own, and the majority of subjects had a friend or family member who worked as a nurse (Heath, 2001). However, 4.7% of our participants indicate negative reaction from family, this is similar to a study carried out by Wu et al. (2017) which discovered that several research found parents to be unsupportive of their children pursuing the nursing profession due to low salary and status, a viewpoint shared by others. Undergraduate nursing students' perceptions of the nursing profession are greatly influenced by their families. According to research, parental drive significantly affects how these students are viewed (Bartfay & Clow, 2010). The Mann Whitney U check at the NPVS- R evaluation (table 5) on having a nurse friend or relative there was no statistically significant difference between having a nurse friend or relative when compared with the participants' characteristics ( $p>0.05$ ). Having friends or family members who are nurses or who had spent time in hospitals was identified as an influential factor in a study (Mckenna et al., 2023).

In our findings 16.5% of the participant choses nursing as a profession due to the availability of work. This corresponds with a study carried out in the United States by Buerhaus et al. (2005), significantly over one third of the individuals entered nursing due to job availability.

The perception of nurses needs to be changed to one that emphasizes their knowledge, abilities, and competence as well as their many roles and responsibilities and the autonomous nature of their job to prevent misconceptions from influencing people's decisions to pursue careers in nursing. A realistic and positive perception of nursing should be promoted, and nursing schools should already be teaching students how to engage with the public and the media.

### Limitations

In this study, the limitations of the study include the fact that the number of participants was limited to 212 and that it was conducted only at a university in Northern Cyprus over a certain period of time.

### CONCLUSION

In this study, the factors affecting professional values were determined to be gender, family, and desire to help. Positive views regarding the nursing profession were demonstrated by the study's findings among undergraduate nursing students. There was

a statistically significant difference between gender and marital status, but not a statistically significant difference between having a nurse friend or relative when compared to participant characteristics and NPVS-R scale scores. There was a statistically significant difference between the reason for selecting nursing education, nationality, and year at the university. According to this study, the attitudes of family members regarding nursing have influenced the career choice making of their children, thus it is vital to develop recruitment techniques that not only attract candidates, but also influence the perception of parents. It is recommended that the male gender should be encouraged into the nursing profession to break the gender stereotype.

**Araştırmannın Etik Yönü/Ethics Committee Approval:** Ethical approval was obtained from the University Scientific Researches and Ethics Committee (YDU/2022/102-1544). Participation was voluntary and each participant accepted an informed consent before participation in the study.

**Hakem/Peer-Review:** The external referees are independent.

**Yazar Katkısı/Author Contributions:** Study Conception: WIM, SE; Study Design: SE; Data collection and/or Processing: WIM, SE; Literature Review: WIM; Manuscript Preparation: WIM, SE; Critical Review: SE.

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