

RESEARCH/ARAŞTIRMA

FACTORS AFFECTING THE CHOICE OF PROFESSION OF 1ST GRADE
NURSING STUDENTS*

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The study aimed at identifying reasons for choosing nursing profession of first grade nursing students.

Methods: The study designed in descriptive model, was also carried out in Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Health Sciences with 141 students who agreed to participate in the study from 180 first grade nursing students. The data were gathered using Information Form and Scale of nurse career choice (SNCC) between the 14 March -1 April 2016 and were analysed with percentages, means, ANOVA, T tests, Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests.

Results: According to SNCC; students' mean total percent score was 52.34%±14.54%, mean percent score for professional suitability was 54.21%±19.99% and mean percent score for vital reasons were 48.90%±15.10%. Especially professional suitability percent scores and total scale percent scores of those who made first five career options nursing during the profession selection period after university entrance exam and were served by nurses were high. Percent scores vital reasons of those who preferred nursing because their university entrance grades were enough only for nursing schools were higher while percent score of professional suitability were lower (p<0.05).

Conclusion: It was explored that students preferred nursing due to high employment possibility in nursing, being interested in nursing, encouragements of families and health care staff and attractive economic factors. In this direction, it may be suggested to plan and implement programs to increase students' will, ability and success in order to train qualified nurses.

Keywords: Nurses, nursing, occupations, students.

ÖZ

Hemşirelik Birinci Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Meslek Seçimini Etkileyen Faktörler

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın amacı hemşirelik birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin hemşirelik mesleğini seçme nedenlerini belirlemektir.

Yöntem: Tanımlayıcı nitelikteki bu araştırma, Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi'nde öğrenim gören 180 hemşirelik 1. sınıf öğrencisinden araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 141 öğrenci ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler, Bilgi formu ve Hemşirelikte Meslek Seçim Ölçeği (HMSÖ) kullanılarak 14 Mart -1 Nisan 2016 tarihleri arasında toplanmış, yüzde, ortalama, ANOVA, t testleri, Mann Whitney U ve Kruskal Wallis testleri ile değerlendirilmiştir

Bulgular: HMSÖ göre öğrenciler ölçek toplamında %52.34±%14.54, mesleğe uygunluk %54.21±%19.99 ve yaşamsal nedenler %48.90±%15.10 alt boyutlarında yüzde ortalamaları almıştır. Özellikle üniversite giriş sınavından sonra meslek seçiminde hemşireliği ilk beş tercihi arasına yerleştiren, bir hemşireden hizmet alan öğrencilerin mesleğe uygunluk alt boyutu ve ölçek toplam yüzde ortalamaları yüksektir. Lisans giriş puanı sadece hemşireliğe yettiği için hemşireliği tercih eden öğrencilerin mesleğe uygunluk alt boyut yüzde ortalamaları düşüken, yaşamsal faktörler alt boyut yüzde ortalamaları yüksektir (p<0.05).

Sonuç: Öğrencilerin hemşireliği; iş imkânının fazla olması aynı zamanda kendi istek ve ilgileri doğrultusunda, ailelerinin ve meslekte çalışan kişilerin teşviki ile ve ekonomik faktörlerin de cazip gelmesi nedeniyle seçtikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu doğrultuda nitelikli hemşirelerin yetişebilmesi için öğrencilerin istek, yetenek ve başarılarını artırmaya yönelik programların planlanması ve uygulanması önerilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hemşireler, hemşirelik, meslekler, öğrenciler.

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INTRODUCTION

Profession is a work, way, an occupation, path, school, and ecocycle for individuals to maintain their lives, make a living and also have a spiritual satisfaction and it should have an occupational responsibility that would serve for the public welfare (1,2). Accordingly, the more a profession serves for the humanity, the more valuable it will become. Today's rapid social changes cause the emergence of different professions on one hand and decrease the social status and economic opportunities of some professions on the other. Therefore, this condition is effective in the choice of profession of students (3). Because an individual's professional success and job satisfaction will be directly affected by her or his conscious choice of profession. If the person makes choices carefully and makes decisions selflessly, she or he will have a lower risk of facing a disappointment or unhappiness due to her or his choice (4).

One of the most important factors affecting the lives of individuals is choice of profession. Individuals will be successful in choosing their profession only through tending towards appropriate professions and choosing areas where they can be happy in line with their interests, talents and limits. They will also become productive in their profession, which will consequently provide a benefit to both themselves and their society. When young individuals arrive at a point of choosing a profession, they begin to consider which profession can make them happy and self-fulfilling and embark on a quest. Therefore, the matter of choosing a profession is a critical process and creates stress and pressure on the youth (2,3).

Students who will choose a university should prioritize occupational groups with a higher opportunity of finding a job after graduation (5). Profession of nursing which is among primary professions in this ranking is an applied health discipline that requires theoretical knowledge and skill. In this practice, nurses are responsible for enhancing the health, preventing diseases, regaining one's health, and relieving the pain (6). Nursing is a profession that has certain difficulties, focuses on individuals' health and attaches a great importance to occupational professionalism. In choosing the profession of nursing which is of great value because it focuses on human life, it is very important for candidates to act consciously and to be positive concerning the reasons of choosing the profession and

perception of nursing. If individuals make a mistake in choosing their profession, they may even create a suffering for individuals to whom they will provide health service when they begin their profession (4). Thus, it is required to determine the perspectives of nurse candidates on the profession at schools where they receive nursing education and raise their awareness about this matter and also enable nurses working actively in the profession to become willing and conscious members of profession (7). Accordingly, there is a need for evaluating the reasons for nurse candidates to choose the profession of nursing. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the factors affecting the choice of profession of nursing students who choose the profession of nursing and will work in this area.

Research Questions:

- What are the reasons for nursing students to choose nursing profession?
- What are the factors affecting the choice of nursing profession?
- Do students' sociodemographic characteristics affect their choice of nursing profession?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: This descriptive study was conducted to determine the reasons for 1st-year nursing students at Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Health Sciences Department of Nursing to choose the profession of nursing. After receiving consent from the students who were voluntary to participate in the study, face-to-face interviews were conducted with them and an information form and the Scale of Nurse Career Choice were applied and gathered by the researchers in person between 14 March and 1 April 2016.

Population: The population of the study consisted of 1st-year students receiving education at Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Health Sciences Department of Nursing (N=180). In the study, no sample was selected and the entire population was tried to be reached. The study was conducted with 141 students who agreed to participate in the study. The response rate is 78%.

Procedure and Data Collection: Data collection tools include an information form aiming to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the students and "Scale of Nurse Career Choice" aiming to determine the factors that affect the choice of profession.

Information form: Prepared by the researchers; the information form includes 16

questions about socio-demographic characteristics of students such as gender, age, socio-economic level, mother's/father's educational background, attitude of their families, order and reason of choosing nursing, state of going to school willingly, presence of a nurse in family/immediate vicinity, the effect of this condition on the choice of profession and the extent of that effect, state of receiving service from a nurse, the effect of this condition on the choice of profession and the extent of that effect and what they would be if they weren't nurses.

Scale of Nurse Career Choice (SNCC): The scale was developed by Zysberg and Berry (8) in 2005 to determine the reasons affecting the choice of profession of nursing students in 2005. Adapted into Turkish by Onler and Varol Saraçoğlu (9); the "Scale of Nurse Career Choice" consists of 17 items. The Cronbach's alpha value of the overall scale is 0.79. The scale consists of 2 subscales as Professional suitability (items 1,2,3,4,5,7,9,14,15,16, and 17) and Vital Reasons (items 6,8,10,11,12, and 13) and a total of 17 items. Each item of the scale is rated and evaluated between 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, and 100%. Among the scale items; while 0% indicates no effect on the choice of profession, 100% indicates the most important factor in the choice of profession. Total scale score and subscale scores are obtained by dividing the total of percentages given by participants to the scale into the number of questions in the scale (8,9). In the study, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of the overall scale was calculated as 0.81.

Ethical Consideration: In order to use the Scale of Nurse Career Choice, a permission was obtained via e-mail from the researcher who developed the scale on 10.03.2016. In order to conduct the study, a written permission was obtained from the deanship of faculty of health sciences with which the department of nursing was affiliated on 14.03.2016. Also, consent has been obtained from surveyed students. The study is limited with the views of 1st-year students at Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Health Sciences Department of Nursing.

Data Analysis: The IBM SPSS Statistics 22 (IBM Corp., Armonk, New York, USD) statistical packaged program was used to assess the data of the study. While the data were analyzed with percentages and means tests for describing the demographic characteristics of the students, the demographic characteristics and scale scores of the students were compared using

t test, Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Choice of profession is people's decision of choosing a convenient profession with more desired aspects and less undesired aspects according to their own needs by addressing all possible professions from all aspects. Choice of profession is among incidents that will affect people's happiness, success and self-realization in their lives after a certain age (10). Profession of nursing is a professional occupational group with important responsibilities like protection and development of health and recovery of diseases. Thus, factors like interest, ability and desire should be a prerequisite for choosing this profession. If students choose their profession more consciously, they will adapt to their department and profession more easily (11). Among the students; 80.1% were aged 19 and younger, 79.4% were female, 69.5% had a middle socio-economic level, 34.8% had primary school graduate father, 51.8% had primary school graduate mother, 77.3% had families with a democratic attitude, 74.5% chose nursing within the first 5 orders, 62.4% chose nursing willingly, and 31.2% would have become a teacher if she is not a nurse. Additionally, 61% of the students chose the profession of nursing due to a greater job opportunity, 33.3% due to their own desire and interest, 21.3% due to desire of their families, 17.7% due to economic factors, 12.1% due to having a point enough for only the profession of nursing, 11.3% due to guidance by other people, 4.3% due to appreciation of the profession in society, and 4.3% due to suitability of the profession. Among the students, 62.4% indicated that they had a nurse in their families, 61.4% stated that the nurse in their families did not affect their choice of profession, and 97.1% of the students whose choice of profession was affected by a nurse indicated that their choice of profession was affected positively. 71.6% of the students indicated that they received service from a nurse before, 53.9% stated that the nurse did not affect their choice of profession and 92% of the students whose choice of profession was affected by a nurse indicated that their choice of profession was affected positively.

In this study, total mean percentage of nursing students, who were mostly aged 19 and younger, female, had a middle socio-economic level, and had primary school graduate parents, was determined as 52% for the Scale of Nurse Career Choice, 54% for professional suitability

and 48.9% for vital reasons (Table 1). In other words, the students chose the profession of nursing due to both convenience and obligation in half shares. However, convenience was observed to outweigh a little more in this rating. In addition, it is a natural and desired condition for students, who find nursing convenient, to choose nursing. Kardaş Ozdemir et al. (5) was determined that shows a parallelism with this study. Because this result will make students improve and like their profession, have a job satisfaction and adopt their profession. Additionally, this enables individuals to adopt their profession, as well. On the other

hand, it is believed that the students who had chosen the profession of nursing due to vital reasons or some obligations might have chosen the profession due to the guidance of their families, relatives, and circle (4). In the studies by Kardaş Ozdemir et al. (5); Kalkım et al. (12); Kulakçı et al.(13); Ozveren et al. (14) and Tercan et al. (15), it was determined that the students had usually chosen the profession due to its suitability rather than vital reasons/obligations, which shows a parallelism with this study. These results showed that students who chose the profession of nursing did so due to its suitability.

Table 1. Mean Percentages of Students for the Scale of Nurse Career Choice and Its Subscales According to the Perceptions of Students (n=141)

| Subscales | N | Mean Percentage | SD | Min | Max |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Professional Suitability | 141 | 54.21% | 19.99% | 8.18% | 94.55% |
| Vital Reasons | 141 | 48.90% | 15.10% | 10.00% | 96.67% |
| Scale of Nurse Career Choice -Total | 141 | 52.34% | 14.54% | 12.94% | 84.12% |

Majority of the students included nursing within their first five choices. These results show a similarity with the results in the literature (6,7,16,17). In addition, nursing students who had included nursing within their first five choices had higher total ($F=3.898$; $p=0.023$) and professional suitability ($F=4.225$; $p=0.017$) mean percentages ($p<0.05$, Table 2), which may suggest that students who include nursing within 1-5 choices are more convenient for the profession than others and nursing students have begun to choose nursing in top orders. In another study conducted abroad, it was determined that 75% of students chose the profession in the first order (18). Accordingly, it can be interpreted that failure of today’s university graduate ones to find a job has directed high school graduates towards nursing. Based on these results, it can be asserted that most of participant students chose the profession of nursing willingly because they included the profession within their first five choices.

Individuals who have a profession in accordance with their interests and abilities not only fulfil their tasks in society willingly, but also progress in their profession, have a professional satisfaction, and continue their lives happily and productively (7,19). The students who chose the department of nursing with their own desire and interest had higher total ($t=6.759$; $p=0.000$) mean percentages for the Scale of Nurse Career Choice and higher mean percentages for the subscale of professional suitability ($t=8.779$; $p=0.000$), which made us think that students who chose the profession according to their own desire and

interest were more convenient for nursing ($p<0.05$) (Table 2). Higher number of the students who had chosen the profession with their own desire is a positive condition indicating that the individual will have a job satisfaction work happily and peacefully, contribute to the development of the profession and work professionally when she or he begins to work (4). In this respect, the result poses a positive condition for the profession of nursing. In addition, individuals who chose the department of nursing willingly had higher total ($t=4.203$; $p=0.000$) mean percentages of the Scale of Nurse Career Choice and higher mean percentages of the subscale of professional suitability ($t=4.942$; $p=0.000$) ($p<0.05$) (Table 2). Some studies also support the results of the present study (12,20). In this study by Bölükbaş (21), it was determined that the majority of the students prefer nursing willingly. Besides, in the studies by Kardaş Ozdemir et al. (5) and Ozveren et al. (14), it was determined that the students who came to the department willingly had higher total mean percentages of the scale, which also made us think that students who chose the profession of nursing willingly were more convenient for and more prone to the profession than students who did not. It is a pleasing result for nursing because the ideal point for a student in choosing a profession is choosing it willingly. Choosing a profession willingly may enable individuals to practice their profession gladly, have a job satisfaction, become professional nurses and provide a quality healthcare service. Progress of nursing in Turkey

and enhancement of its status depend on practicing the profession profoundly. This will only be possible through making nursing students

like the profession and have a positive perspective of the future of the profession and thus their own future (12).

Table 2. Comparing the Reasons for Students to Choose the Profession of Nursing and the Mean Percentages of the Scale of Nurse Career Choice (n=141)

| Reasons | n | Professional suitability | Vital reasons | Scale of nurse career choice total |
|--|-----|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| | | Mean±SD | Mean±SD | Mean±SD |
| Order of choosing the department | | | | |
| 1-5 ¹ | 105 | 56.96%±19.80% | 49.23%±15.06% | 54.23%±14.39% |
| 6-10 ² | 21 | 44.58%±16.45% | 46.74%±17.83% | 45.35%±13.44% |
| 11 and above ³ | 15 | 48.48%±21.65% | 49.55%±11.58% | 48.86%±14.32% |
| | | F=4.225 | F=0.251 | F=3.898 |
| | | p=0.017 | p=0.778 | p=0.023 |
| Tukey (p<0.05) | | 1>2 | | 1>2 |
| State of choosing willingly | | | | |
| Yes | 88 | 60.53%±16.26% | 48.69%±15.22% | 56.35%±12.01% |
| No | 53 | 43.72%±21.31% | 49.24%±15.04% | 45.67%±15.98% |
| | | t=4.942 | t=-0.209 | t=4.203 |
| | | p=0.000 | p=0.834 | p=0.000 |
| State of choosing based on desire/interest | | | | |
| Yes | 47 | 69.22%±11.14% | 46.31%±15.79% | 61.13%±8.08% |
| No | 94 | 46.71%±19.22% | 50.19%±14.66% | 47.94%±15.08% |
| | | t=8.779 | t=-1.444 | t=6.759 |
| | | p=0.000 | p=0.151 | p=0.000 |
| State of choosing based on the desire of family | | | | |
| Yes | 30 | 47.96%±22.51% | 47.11%±15.18% | 47.66%±16.92 |
| No | 111 | 55.90%±19.02% | 49.38%±15.11% | 53.60%±13.64% |
| | | t=-1.948 | t=-0.730 | t=-2.004 |
| | | p=0.053 | p=0.467 | p=0.047 |
| Having a point enough only for nursing | | | | |
| Yes | 17 | 41.71%±22.23% | 55.68%±13.70% | 46.64%±18.02% |
| No | 124 | 55.93%±19.13% | 47.97%±15.10% | 53.12%±13.91% |
| | | t=-2.817 | t=1.996 | t=-1.734 |
| | | p=0.006 | p=0.048 | p=0.085 |
| Effect of nursing service on the choice of profession (n=101) | | | | |
| Yes | 25 | 62.83%±17.35% | 49.80%±16.16% | 58.23%±11.59% |
| No | 76 | 50.41%±20.88% | 48.15%±13.99% | 49.62%±15.44% |
| | | t=-2.681 | t=0.489 | t=-2.559 |
| | | p=0.009 | p=0.626 | p=0.012 |
| Which profession would you choose outside nursing | | | | |
| Doctor ¹ | 36 | 51.060%±22.905% | 50.227%±14.641% | 50.784%±16.014% |
| Teacher ² | 45 | 57.959%±17.485% | 48.444%±13.809% | 54.601%±12.661% |
| Engineer-Architect ³ | 40 | 56.659%±20.946% | 44.291%±15.945% | 52.294%±15.830% |
| Dietician-PTR ⁴ | 20 | 46.590%±15.673% | 56.666%±1.272% | 50.147%±14.548% |
| | | F:2.037 | F: 3.268 | F:0.646 |
| | | p=0.112 | p=0.023 | P=0.587 |
| Tukey (p<0.05) | | | 4>3 | |

Families in the Turkish society often tend to protect their children by the social structure. These families have an influence on the decisions about lives of their children concerning the future and acquiring a profession. Accordingly, parents may guide their children to health-related professions due to different reasons (4). The students who chose the department of nursing

with the desire of their families had lower total (t=-2.004; p=0.047) mean percentages of the Scale of Nurse Career Choice, which made us think that students who chose the profession with the desire of their families were less convenient for the profession than others (p<0.05) (Table 2). In this study by Bölükbaş (21), it was determined

that the students preferred nursing with the wishes of the family.

The students who chose nursing because their undergraduate entrance points were enough only for the profession of nursing had lower mean percentages of the professional suitability subscale ($t=-2.817$; $p=0.006$) and higher mean percentages of the vital reasons subscale ($t=1.996$; $p=0.048$) ($p<0.05$) (Table 2). It was thought that the students who chose the profession because their points were sufficient were less convenient for the profession than others and chose the profession with the guidance of their families and circle. Similar to the present study, in another study, it was also determined that the students who obtained 350 points and below from the entrance to higher education examination had higher mean percentage of vital reasons than the students who obtained 351 points and above from the entrance to higher education examination (7). The students who indicated that the nursing service which they received before affected their choice of profession had higher total ($t=-2.559$; $p=0.012$) mean percentages of the Scale of Nurse Career Choice and higher mean percentages of the subscale of professional suitability ($t=-2.681$; $p=0.009$) ($p<0.05$) (Table 2). Similarly, in the study by Ozdelikara et al. (20), it was determined that the students who received nursing service before had higher total and subscale mean percentages. These results made us think that the students probably met good nursing role models. Due to the increase of the value attached by society to professions like nursing, child development, physiotherapy, health management and social service in faculties of health sciences as well as the increase of job opportunities; there is an increasing interest in these professions (3). Students who wanted to choose the departments of PTR and dietetics outside nursing in their undergraduate education had higher mean percentages of the subscale of vital reasons ($F=3.268$; $p=0.023$) ($p<0.05$) (Table 2). This made us think that the students wanted to choose professions especially in the health sector in order to avoid being jobless.

Throughout the historical process, the profession of nursing has never been a desired and intended profession. However, it also is interesting that nursing is not an intended profession by individuals but is usually chosen by individuals. The reasons of this are that the profession enables individuals to find a job easily, help other people and work in safe environments. When considering Turkey in particular; lower rate

of unemployment in nursing than many other professions is among the most important reasons of choosing the profession (4). In the study, it was thought that majority of students chose the profession of nursing mainly because of the lower risk of unemployment. It is thought that the profession is chosen because the problem of finding a job in Turkey, is faced less in the health sector, especially in nursing. In this study by Bölükbaş (21), it was determined that the students preferred nursing with the thoughts they would not have unemployment in the future. When considering the studies conducted abroad; in the study conducted by Mooney et al. (22) to determine the reasons for undergraduate students to choose nursing as a career and the factors affecting that decision, it was determined that nursing students chose their career due to job security and opportunities of finding a job. In the study conducted by Cho et al. (18) to examine the factors affecting the characteristics and career decisions of nursing students compared to students outside nursing, it was found that employment played a major reason for nursing students to choosing the profession of nursing. In the study by Hollup (23) to examine the reasons for nurses in Norway to choose their profession, the participants indicated that nursing brought along a job security, stable income and employment. In the study investigating the perceptions of nursing students in Poland to choose their profession, it was found that they chose nursing mainly due to the opportunity of employment (24). These results indicated that the profession of nursing was also chosen due to economic factors like finding a job and avoiding being jobless after graduation.

It was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the students' age, gender, socio-economic condition, mother's/father's educational background, attitude of their families, which profession they would have chosen outside nursing, and the total and subscale mean percentages of the Scale of Nurse Career Choice and the percentage averages of the lower dimensions ($p>0.05$). It was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the students' state of choosing the profession of nursing due to the opportunity of finding a job, economic factors, desire of other people, appreciation of the profession in society and convenience of the profession, and the total mean percentages of the Scale of Nurse Career Choice and the mean percentages of its subscales ($p>0.05$). It was also

determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the students' state of having a nurse in their families, the effect of the nurse on their choice of profession and the extent of that effect, state of having received service from a nurse before and the extent of the effect of that service, and the total and subscale mean percentages of the Scale of Nurse Career Choice ($p>0.05$). According to these results; the fact that socio-economic factors and others did not affect the students' choice of profession is thought to be associated with their concern about being jobless. In other studies, it was also determined that there was a statistically insignificant difference between the students' age (5, 12), income status of families, presence of a nurse among relatives (12) and mean percentages of choice of profession.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was determined that the students chose the profession of nursing willingly; within their first five choices, with their own desire and interest, due to higher opportunity of finding a job, encouragement of their families and also under the influence of the nursing service which they had received before and their exam points. In other words, the students chose the profession of nursing due to its suitability and also almost half of them chose the profession of nursing due to

living conditions. It can be useful to conduct programs or projects aiming to introduce the profession more carefully in guidance services in order to help the youth and their families to choose the right profession before the youth choose their profession and repeat these programs and projects in the course of time, organize conferences on special days and weeks for students to identify the profession of nursing accurately and provide extensive information about all professions by members of the profession in these conferences. It is recommended for nurses and academicians who would set a good role model to make contribution to introduction of professions in guidance courses for introducing this profession and provide a continuous consultancy on this matter in counseling courses in order to enable students to choose their profession after knowing it well enough. It is also possible to establish a higher education system enabling both vertical and lateral transfers according to students' desires, abilities and successes in order to raise a qualified youth as targeted.

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