

Perception of College Students towards Nursing as a Career Choice

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author MAI designed the study, collected the data, collaborated in the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author KMAS performed the statistical analysis and supervised the study. Author MTI managed the analyses of the study. Author MSIR managed the literature searches and helped in data collection. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nursing as a branch of health care system is to serve the humanity. The demand of nursing is growing worldwide and Bangladesh is no exception for that.

Objectives: The present study has been undertaken to assess the perception and identify the factors influencing the perception of college students towards taking nursing as a career choice for future.

Materials and Methods: This is a descriptive cross-sectional study that was carried out of 164 respondents. A semi-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Collected data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Results: The most significant findings indicate that 58.2% out of total respondents who would consider the nursing is a respectful and honorable profession, 62.2% were females while 37.8% were males. Out of which 70.0% respondents perceived that nursing is the only female career choice. An overall assessment of perception in this study showed that most of the students had average perception, $m \pm sd = 3.6 \pm .994$ (72.3%) towards nursing profession as a career choice. There

is found no significant relationship between sex, education of parents and living area in considering nursing as a career choice ($p > 0.05$). This study also reported 66.5% students held positive perception on nursing as a career in future that nursing is a profession needs study, skills and proper practice to consider as a career choice. But this study revealed significant relationship between perception and socio demographic characteristics such as religion of the students, occupation of the parents and family monthly income ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Study recommends parents occupation with their guidance role to develop admirable image among college students to choose the nursing as a career in future. There is a need for college students to be aware of what nursing as a profession entails that sex is not a determining factor to become a better nurse.

Keywords: Image; perception; career; college students; nursing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the study: Nursing has been called the oldest arts and sciences in health care system. For as long as there has been life, there has been the need to provide care and comfort to alleviate suffering from illness and injury. Nursing is considered as one of the greatest of humanitarian services to all people whether ill or well, rich or poor, literate or illiterate, young or old are likely at some point in their life to depend upon the care provided by the nurses [1].

Nursing is one of the most dedicated professions in the health care contexts focused on the care of individuals, families and communities [2,3]. The sustainability of nursing profession closely depends on maintaining equilibrium between those that enter and exit the professions. A multi-dimensional perspective career choice has to be examined in order to situate the choice of nursing as a career among higher secondary schools students [4,5,6]. Student perceptions on the field of nursing may have the largest impact on their decisions making to seek better opportunities to learn more about the profession [7]. Because, Career choice decision is one of the most critical issues for the students to make the more effective choice and positive impact on their self-concept development and fulfillment of one's life purposes. In Bangladesh, career choice is greatly motivated by a number of factors liked parents' background, communities' communications and spiritual in various sectors [4,8]. At present, there are abundant vocations and occupations available to an individual to an individual to choose. But vocational interest or benefit and career choices do not appear all of student [9].

Historically, nursing profession has been considered as a female dominated profession and not appropriate for male gender [10]. Diversity is the common crucial issue in the

nursing workforce but the benefits of diversity, from the point of view of the male nurse are able to make the workforce more welcoming and accommodating towards men by encouraging a larger number of male recruit and reducing male attrition. With the impending shortage of registered nurses nationally and internationally, the recruitment of more men into nursing becomes more important. Men belong over 50% of the workforce, and constitute a viable population to answer the inevitable nursing shortage. A better understanding of secondary school students' perception of nursing as a career choice for men is required to further efforts to increase the number of men in nursing [11]. In a recent study on choice of career in nursing, reported that altruism and work-related motives have been identified as reasons for becoming a nurse [12]. In the past, nursing was usually provided by criminals and prostitutes [13]. In 19th century, Florence Nightingale (1820—1910), a lady belongs to well cultured family joined nursing and provided care to sick and wounded soldier during Vietnam War. Besides, the Lamps lady (Nightingale) contribution is the education of women, her development of theories of nursing practice and hygienic techniques, the emphasis on the preparation of nurses for the care of sick, protection and promotion of health of the individuals and society are very important facts of nursing spectrum today [3,9].

On the other hand, India along with Bangladesh, there are alarming shortage of nurses and patient nurses ratio that compromising the quality of health care provided to the individuals, families, communities and on the consumer satisfactions. Many strategies currently need to address the scarcity of nurses and changing the perception of public and college students towards nursing could be a one strategy for attracting more students to join the nursing profession. College students' perception towards

nursing is important as they offer strategic clues towards successful recruitment to the next generation of nurses. Perception, attitude and belief are highly subjective and usually not based on facts [3,7,14]. Nurses are the largest and single component of any hospital or in variety of health care settings who deliver most of the nation's health care. However, it is essential to understand why students choose Nursing as a career. If those reasons are well-understood, more appropriate recruitment strategies can be developed. A poor image of Nursing as a career choice is a major contributor to the Nursing shortage. Undoubtedly, Nursing is a Noble Profession and it requires loving heart for compassionate care. In the 21st century, the demand of nursing is growing worldwide [15]. Previous research studies, reported that most students greatly decided to come in nursing profession in order to help others Koushali AN [16] conducted a study in Tehran, Iran and found that 65.4% of the students would not choose nursing as career after graduation.

Especially in the case of nursing many studies currently revealed that most of college students are aware of the calling & helping in nature of nursing but have little perception about the diversity of nursing career opportunities in teaching, management & administration [9,17]. At national level, a very few studies explored the perception and future job prospective of college students towards nursing undertaken to assess the perception and factors influencing perception towards nursing as a career perspective in Bangladesh.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design

A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted in this study. The proposal was accepted by the IRB board of public health department of Leading University, Sylhet, Bangladesh.

2.2 Study Participants

This study was conducted at 4 Govt and 4 Private Higher Secondary School and College in Selected district (Jamalpur and Sherpur) in Bangladesh. The target population was the eleven and twelve classes' students between the age group 16--22 years who were willingly agreed to participate on the day of data collection (inclusion criteria). Researcher distributed the questionnaire to 200 college students and the questionnaire forms were filled by the

participants. At last researcher got 164 questionnaires returned from the participants. The study duration was from January to June, 2020.

2.3 Sampling and Sample Size

A non-convenience sampling technique was used in this study. A sample size was determined by using the formulae, $n = z^2 pq / d^2$. Let, $n = 200$.

2.4 Data Collection Instrument

The Data Collection Instruments was prepared by researcher based on literature review. Validity was confirmed through a review by a panel of experts consisting of nursing professionals as well as experienced researchers from department of public health, Leading University, Sylhet, Bangladesh and the CVI score was .82. The instruments of data collection consist with two parts:

2.4.1 Part A

The Socio demographic Data Questionnaire was developed by the researchers including age of students, sex, religion, present year of study, department, residence, parents occupation and education and any family member in nursing profession etc to identify the relation with the perception of college students towards nursing.

2.4.2 Part B

The perception towards nursing as a career was also categorized as positive or negative. It was scored on a scale of 13--65 with a score of 13-45 is regarded as negative perception while a score of 46-65 is regarded as positive perception. Respondents answer Strongly Agree = 5 marks, Agree = 4 marks, Neutral=3marks, Disagree =2marks and Strongly Disagree= 1mark [11]. Results all data collection questionnaires were developed by the researcher based on existing literature review. The questionnaires gathered information about perception towards nursing as a career. Data was collected by semi-structured questionnaire using English version and before distributing to study sample it was translated into Bengali by back translated method.

2.5 Data Collection

A reliability test was done on 16 students of Sylhet Modon Muhon college who were not included with the main sample and the reliability test score was .92. Researcher distributed the questionnaire to all participants and collected the

data by help of research assistant. Data was collected with semi-structured questionnaire and the data collection period was from May to June, 2020.

2.6 Data Analysis

Collected data manually was double checked for correctness and completeness immediately after collection and thereafter coded for data entry. Collected data were analyzed by using specially designed computerized "Statistical Package" (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. The descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to organize and present socio-demographic characteristics and perception related variables. The inferential statistics such as chi-square test was used to examine the relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and their perception towards nursing as a career choice.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 shows that 164 participants were participated in this study. The age range having 16-18 years was 59%; 19-22 years was 41%. The out of total respondents, 62% were females and 67% were Muslim. Out of which, 60% respondents were class eleventh while only 39 % were twelve classes students. Majority of the respondents participated from urban area among them their family monthly income had less than ten thousand taka BD only.

Table 2 shows that this part consists of 13 items in which perceived belief factors measured by frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Perception administration capacity was assessed in 5 point likert scale. Total score of perceived was $M \pm SD = 3.62 \pm .994$ (72.3%). Out of 13 items 3 highest statements are for "Only science students can become a nurse (4.14 \pm .984); only nursing takes intelligence to be a nurse (4.11 \pm .978), Nursing is also one of the most secure job for carrier establishment (4.11 \pm .898)". Conversely the two lowest statements are for "Nurses follow only the doctor's order without any questioning and direction and Nursing is one of low category profession those are negative image but only (2.46 \pm 1.01; 2.47 \pm 1.02) have the positive image towards nursing among the respondents.

Table 3 show that it was scored on a scale of 13-65 with a score of 13-45 is regarded as negative

perception while a score of 46-65 is regarded as positive perception. So, this table shows that 66.5% respondents had positive perception and 33.5% respondents had negative perception towards nursing as a career choice [Table 3].

4. DISCUSSION

Nurse is the single most important frontline health care worker in health contexts. Nursing is a one of the career choice profession and it is considered to be a service to serve the humanity because everyone entering this career feels to provide services to people. There are so many different positive and negative aspects regarding college student's perception about nursing profession. College students are in the age when they have to take decision about choosing a secure career in their life. In this study showed a favorable perception towards the nursing image. This study reported 66.5% students held positive perception on nursing as a career that is similar with another study concluded that 85.5% students perceived nursing as positively [1]. In Bangladesh now Nursing are recognized with second class officer which is very respectful job in our society. So most of college students have positive perception about nursing. In this study more than half of the respondents were Islam (67.1%) which is not similar of the study of Suresh k. (2017). He reported that before liberation different classes of people entered into nursing but day by day due to changes of religious outlook, Muslims are also entering in this profession. Another reason is now Muslims female are doing job besides men in Bangladesh. Nursing mainly female oriented profession and Muslims female are now serving as a nurse. In this study, more than half of the respondents, (58.5%) came from the urban area indicating the similar study [13,18]. As this study indicates (p -value=0.201*) but we know urban and rural college students considered nursing as a career choice differently due to lack of interest, fear of contact with ill/dying people and lack of society recognition or thinking of substandard. [Table 4].

39% came from the science department which is slightly similar study conducted by Ogunyewo (2015). Another study conducted by Florence (2018) reported that 51.5% were the commerce department students. In Bangladesh science is mandatory for nursing graduation course but in Diploma level science is not mandatory which influences college students from different group to choose nursing as a career. On the other hand, 79.3% participants would not consider

nursing for future because it requires only the science background and it (75.3%) takes only intelligence to be a nurse and similar study reported the same [3,4,11].

In terms of parents' education, 59.8% students' father had higher secondary and 67.7% students' mother had primary education. Though in Bangladesh primary education is compulsory for all but male do late marriage usually for the purpose of well established by doing maximum educational study and it is slightly consistent to Swarna (2015) and respectively contrary to the study [1,3]. Most of the respondents' father had their own business and mother worked as a housewife which is similar to [1,3] but contrary to the study [4]. Generally, the maximum occupations of students' mothers had a more significant impact on their choice of career than the occupations of their fathers and also reported the same [17]. In this study 58.2% respondents perceived that nursing is a respectful and honorable profession and also partially consistent to the study [3,11,18,19]. Similar findings reported in a study conducted on nursing students by Patidar AB et al. [13] where said that nursing is not a dignified and respectful profession and not recognized by society.

This finding reveals that 70.0% respondents perceived that nursing is the only female career choice because female nurses are more caring and nurturing than male nurses. The similar and partially consistent study reported that nursing is more suitable career choice for females than male [3,11,20]. But, the study show that there is no statistically significant relationship between sex of respondents and perception towards nursing as a career choice for male (p -value=0.452*) and another study reported the similar result [11]. The finding equally shows that there was an increased interest of men who would consider the nursing as a career. In terms of incentives to work in hospitals more than half of the respondents perceived in this study that nurse's service are as important as physician's services that are similar with another study [11]. Around 54.3% respondents believed that nurses can get better marriage proposal and the consistent study reported the same [3]. Although nursing is reinforced as a feminine profession in the findings of this study and nurses are the backbone of health care delivery system but poor public image, substandard job profile, lack of proper respect from doctors and unfavorable society are the common barriers to get better marriage.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Frequency (n=164)	%	Variables	Frequency (n=164)	%
Age			Education of father		
16-18 years	97	59.1	Informal	4	2.4
19-22 years	67	40.9	Primary	16	9.8
Gender			Secondary	46	29.0
Male	62	37.8	Above	98	59.2
Female	102	62.2	Occupation of mother		
Religion			Govt Job	15	9.1
Islam	110	67.1	Housewife	126	76.8
Hindu	54	32.9	Private job	16	9.8
Present year of study			Others	7	4.3
Class 10+1	99	60.4	Education of mother		
Class 10+2	65	39.4	Informal	31	18.9
Department			Primary	111	67.7
Science	64	39	Secondary	21	12.8
Art	50	30.5	Above	1	0.6
Commerce	50	30.5	Monthly family income		
Area of the living			< 10,000 taka BD	106	64.6
Urban	96	58.5	10,000 –15,000 taka BD	48	29.3
Rural	68	41.5	> 15,000 taka BD	10	6.1
Occupation of father					
Govt Job	35	21.3			
Self-Business	74	45.1			
Private job	51	31.1			
Others	4	2.4			

Table 2. Respondents overall perception towards nursing as a career

Statements	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly-agree (%)	M±SD
1. Nursing is a respectful and honourable profession	8(4.9)	11(6.7)	49(29.9)	53(32.2)	43(26.2)	3.68±1.08
2. Nursing is only the carrier choice for Female	8(4.9)	18(11.0)	23(14.0)	64(39.0)	51(31.0)	3.80±1.14
3. Nursing service is as important as Doctors Service	5(3.0)	12(7.3)	45(27.4)	62(37.8)	40(24.4)	3.73±1.01
4. Nurses can get better marriage comparing general profession.	2(1.2)	11(6.7)	62(37.8)	47(28.7)	42(25.6)	3.71±.966
5. Nurses follow only the doctor's order without any questioning and direction.	3(1.8)	19(11.6)	63(38.4)	44(26.8)	35(21.3)	2.46±1.01
6. Nurses have a lot of chance for carrier advancement in nursing	4(2.4)	14(8.5)	51(31.1)	58(35.4)	37(22.6)	3.67±.998
7. Nurses has also the scope to change the professional line anytime for better advancement	5(3.0)	41(25.0)	50(30.5)	34(20.7)	34(20.7)	3.31±1.14
8. Only science students can become a nurse	3(1.8)	10(6.1)	21(12.8)	57(34.8)	73(44.5)	4.14±.984
9. Nursing is one of low category profession	3(1.8)	19(11.6)	63(38.4)	44(26.8)	35(21.3)	2.47±1.02
10. Only nursing takes intelligence to be a nurse	2(1.2)	10(6.1)	28(17.1)	52(31.7)	72(43.9)	4.11±.978
11. Nursing is also one of the most secure job for carrier establishment	0(0)	12(7.3)	16(9.8)	78(47.7)	58(35.4)	4.11±.898
12. Usually students are motivated to choice of nursing	4(2.4)	11(6.7)	34(20.7)	59(36.0)	56(34.1)	3.93±1.01
13. Nurses earn a lot of money	2(1.2)	9(5.5)	35(21.3)	59(36.0)	59(36.0)	4.00±.953
Total						3.62±.994

Table 3. Respondents perception towards nursing as a career choice

Variables	Frequency	%
Positive perception towards nursing	109	66.5
Negative perception towards nursing	55	33.5

Table 4. Association of positive perceptions with demographic variables towards nursing

Demographic variables	Perception			Chi-square	p-value
Sex	Negative (%)	Positive (%)	Total (%)		
Male	23(37.1)	39(62.9)	62(100)	0.569*	0.452*
Female	32(31.4)	70(68.6)	102(100)		
Religion					
Islam	46(41.8)	64(58.2)	110(100)	10.279	0.001
Hindu	9(16.7)	45(83.3)	54(100)		
Area of the living					
Urban	36(37.5)	60(62.5)	96(100)	1.632	0.201*
Rural	19(27.9)	49(72.1)	68(100)		
Occupation of Father					
Govt Job	17(48.6)	18(51.4)	35(100)	9.952	0.019
Self-Business	24(32.4)	50(67.6)	74(100)		
Private job	11(21.6)	40(78.4)	51(100)		
Others	3(75.0)	1(25.0)	4(100)		
Education of Father					
Informal	3(75.0)	1(25.0)	4(100)	8.396	0.039
Primary	9(56.2)	7(43.8)	16(100)		
Secondary	16(34.8)	30(65.2)	46(100)		
Above	27(27.6)	71(72.4)	98(100)		
Occupation of Mother					
Govt Job	11(73.3)	4(26.4)	15(100)	14.859	0.002
Housewife	40(31.7)	86(68.3)	126(100)		
Private job	4(25.0)	12(75.0)	16(100)		
Others	0(0)	7(100)	7(100)		
Education of Mother					
Informal	16(51.6)	15(48.4)	31(100)	6.361	0.095
Primary	34(30.6)	77(69.4)	111(100)		
Secondary	5(23.8)	16(76.2)	21(100)		
Above	0(0)	1(0.9)	1(100)		
Monthly Family income					
< 10,000 taka BD	45(42.5)	61(57.5)	106(100)	13.498	0.001
10,000 –15,000 taka BD	6(12.5)	42(87.5)	48(100)		
> 15,000 taka BD	4(40.0)	6(60.0)	10(100)		

There is a significant association found between perception with religion of the students ($p= 0.001$), occupation of the parents ($P= .002$) and family monthly income ($p= 0.001$)

Furthermore, our study results are in agreement with the other studies in where around 48% respondents' perceived nurses only follow the doctors' order without any direction and questioning that contribute main point of negative image towards nursing profession [11]. Though half of respondent have negative image due to this point but there have also some contributing factor like night shift duty in hospital for a nurse.

On the other hand, 58.0% respondents perceived that nurses have the chance for career advancement in nursing. 41.2% nurses would change their profession due to lack of acceptance of job security and high salary interest or due to lack of autonomy in working area or due to lack of employment opportunities and partially similar study reported the same [3,18]. Another study by Poreddi V reported that

[21] only 9.3% students wanted to change the profession.

According to the present study 70.1% of the students motivated by self-desire, advice from parents, friends and communities or due to having family health workers to join in nursing to settle early and to get a government job in future and similar study [22]. Another similar study also conducted by Patidar [13] whereas only 71% self motivated to pursue nursing. Though, nursing is a dedicated profession in health care system but 47.3% respondents perceived that nursing is one kind of low category profession and another study reported only 16.4% saw the nursing as a slavery profession [11]. An overall assessment of perception in this study showed that most of the students had average perception, $m \pm sd = 3.6 \pm .994$ (72.3%) towards nursing as a future profession and another study reported 93.0% had overall perception but only 53.0% held the positive perception towards nursing [11].

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion the image on nursing is reinforced as a feminine profession and also entails as a dedicated profession, sex is not a determining factor to become a better nurse in the findings of this study.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Time constrains, the fund is not enough and Small sample size but the confidentiality of information data was ensured.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Nursing as a career for both male and female students should be strongly incorporated in career counseling in order to increase awareness and positive perception towards nursing. Government & authorities must pay an attention to nursing to provide more autonomy and more welcoming and accommodating better consumer satisfactions by attracting both gender into nursing profession following:-A similar study can be conducted to see the impact of the career awareness on Nursing among secondary students by determining the opinion of college teachers as a career counselor; Further research should be implemented to obtain more detailed and extensive data about the barriers to this profession; If anyone want to conduct this study again should be done with big sample size, select randomly and compare with the tertiary level higher secondary school and college.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

After getting permission of IRB of Leading University researcher went to the Assistant Director (AD) General Hospital, Jamalpur, Mymensingh for permission of data Collection. Then, a verbal informed consent was taken from each of the participant with an assurance of ethics.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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