Araştırma Makalesi–Research Paper

NURSING PROFESSION FROM NURSING STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

HEMŞİRELİK ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN BAKIŞ AÇISIYLA HEMŞİRELİK MESLEĞİ: KESİTSEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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Özet

Bu araştırma, hemşirelik öğrencilerinin hemşirelik mesleğini algılama durumlarının belirlenmesi amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırma tanımlayıcı ve kesitsel türdedir. Araştırmanın örneklemini, 5 Ekim 2020 - 8 Aralık 2021 tarihleri arasında İzmir'de bir üniversitenin hemşirelik bölümünde öğrenim görmekte olan 183 gönüllü öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Verilerin toplanmasında, "Birey Tanıtım Formu" ve "Hemşirelik Mesleğini Algılama Ölçeği" (HMAÖ)" kullanılmıştır. Verilerin değerlendirilmesinde, nitel değişkenlere ait tanımlayıcı istatistikler ve non-parametrik testler kullanılmıştır. Öğrencilerin hemşirelik mesleğini algılama ölçeği toplam puanı $87,60 \pm 9,03$, mesleki nitelik alt boyut puanı $66,90 \pm 7,46$ ve mesleki statü alt boyut puanı $20,69 \pm 2,44$'dür. Mesleki nitelikler alt boyutu ile öğrencilerin cinsiyeti ve sınıfı arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark vardır. Hemşirelik mesleğini sevme durumuna göre mesleki nitelik alt boyutu, cinsiyet ve ölçek toplam puan arasında anlamlı fark vardır. Bu araştırma sonucunda, hemşirelik öğrencilerinin hemşirelik mesleğini algılama durumlarının yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir. Hemşire adaylarının hemşirelik mesleğine karşı algılarını olumlu yönde geliştirmeye yönelik ileri çalışmalar yapılması önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hemşirelik Öğrencileri, Hemşirelik Mesleği, Hemşirelik Mesleğini Algılama

Abstract

This research was carried out to determine the nursing students' perceptions of the nursing profession. The research is descriptive and cross-sectional. The sample of the study consisted of 183 volunteer students studying at the nursing department of a university in Izmir between October 5, 2020 - December 8, 2021. "Individual Identification Form" and "Perception of Nursing Profession Scale" (PNPS)" were used to collect data. In the evaluation of the data, descriptive statistics of qualitative variables, and non-parametric tests were used. Students' total score was 87.60 ± 9.03 from the scale, Professional Qualities sub-dimension score was 66.90 ± 7.46, and Professional Status sub-dimension score was 20.69 ± 2.44. There is a statistically significant difference between the Professional Qualities sub-dimension and the gender and class of the students. According to the status of liking the nursing profession, there is a remarkable difference between the Professional Qualities sub-dimension, gender, and total score of the scale. It was determined that nursing students' perception of the nursing profession is high. It is recommended to carry out further studies to improve the perceptions of nurse candidates towards the nursing profession in a positive way.

Keywords: Nursing Students, Nursing Profession, Perception of the Nursing Profession

1. INTRODUCTION

Perceiving the nursing profession not only defines the individual's feelings, thoughts, and how they see nursing education, as well as themselves and their environment, about nursing and professional practices (Yücel et al., 2011, pp. 2; Cerit and Çoşkun, 2018, pp. 284; Eşer et al., 2008, pp. 16-17; Kaya and Dalgıç, 2019, pp. 69-77). In addition, perception in nursing students contributes to the formation of the meaning and perspective attributed to the profession as a result of the increase in knowledge and experience in nursing practices (Aydın, 2017, pp. 36).

From the first step to university, questioning the perception towards the profession should be among the first targets (Lai et al., 2008, pp. 768-776; Özmen and Çetinkaya, 2016, pp. 41-42). It is very crucial for the candidates who will newly join the nursing profession to choose nursing willingly and be aware of their responsibilities. To be willing to help people and take part in the advancement of the nursing profession can facilitate raising the statute of nursing (Kaya et al., 2004, pp. 1-6; Karakuş et al., 2005, pp. 17-20; Türk et al., 2018, pp. 2). At this point, it is essential that nursing students have a positive perception and attitude towards the profession, as well as positive motivation in achieving academic success and adapting to the profession (Cerit and Çoşkun, 2018, pp. 284; Bronson, 2016, pp. 103-108).

The purpose of nursing education; is to train professionals who are in a key position in maintaining the health of the individual and society, who have socio-cultural development, who are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that can meet the ever-changing needs of the society, and professionals who comply with universal nursing norms (Andsoy et al., 2012, pp. 125; Çelik et al., 2013, pp. 148). Students equipped with professional awareness thrown into the working environment causes this awareness to mature faster and to develop professionalism and nursing education (Eşer et al., 2008, pp. 16-17). In addition, it is important to bring perceptual awareness to students in order to bring professionalism to student nurses in nursing education (Kaya and Dalgıç, 2019, pp. 69-77; Özmen and Çetinkaya, 2016, pp. 40-52; Björkström et al., 2008, pp. 1380-1391; Slatyer et al., 2016, pp. 139-150; Cheng, 2016, pp. 91-102; Marcinowicz et al., 2016, pp. 1-8). On the other hand, negative perception of the profession causes low job satisfaction, high burnout and quitting, and studies support these findings (Slatyer et al., 2016, pp 139-150; Cheng, 2016, pp. 91-102). For these reasons, it is very important to understand how students perceive nursing and the reasons for deciding on the nursing profession (Marcinowicz et al., 2016, pp. 1-8). Experiences in the education process provide the development of students' communication, decision-making and observation skills and professional perceptions (Özmen and Çetinkaya, 2016, pp. 41-42; Ak et al., 2018, pp. 233). It is considered important that nursing students acquire a positive professional perception in the basic education process, as it can affect the provision of quality service in their professional lives (Cerit and Çoşkun, 2018, pp. 284; Dimitriadou et al., 2015, pp. 236-242; Nilsson and

Silén, 2010, pp. 631-642). In the literature, it has been observed that there are limited number of studies on the professional perceptions of nurses in our country.

In studies where the NPSS was used, it was found that the mean total score of the PNPS scale ranged between 72.82 + 2.08 and 88.60 + 10.40 (Yücel et al., 2011, pp. 7; Cerit and Çoşkun, 2018, pp. 286; Eşer et al., 2008, pp. 22; Kaya and Dalgıç, 2019, pp. 69-77). For the students who prefer the nursing profession to be trained in the direction of quality nursing care, there is a need to evaluate the interests, wishes, and perceptions of the students about the nursing profession (Ünsar et al., 2011, pp. 2-6; Beydağ and Arslan, 2008, pp. 76-87; Turgay et al., 2005, pp. 55). Based on this, in this research, it was aimed to determine the perception of nursing students about the nursing profession. As a result of the research, understanding the perceptions of nurse candidates towards the nursing profession and the reasons is thought that it will be a guide in determining the problems and producing solutions.

2. METHODS

This descriptive and cross-sectional study was conducted between October 2020 and December 2021 in a university in Western Turkey. The population of the study consisted of first, second and third year students the nursing department (N=220). Since the universe of the research also constitutes the sample, no sample limitation was applied. The sample of the study consisted of 183 volunteer students. "Individual Identification Form" and PNPS were used to collect data.

2.1.   The Individual Identification Form

It comprised of 20 questions, including the socio-demographic characteristics of the students such as age, gender, class, educational status of the parents, and their feelings and thoughts about nursing (Eşer et al., 2008, pp. 16-17; Yücel et al., 2011, pp. 2; Dimitriadou et al., 2015, pp. 236-242, Kaya and Dalgıç, 2019, pp. 69-77).

2.2.   Perception of Nursing Profession Scale" (PNPS)

The scale developed by Eşer et al. was used to measure students' professional perceptions (Eşer et al., 2006, pp. 31-39). The scale is a 5-point Likert-type measurement tool and consists of 22 items. Two sub-dimensions of the scale; "Professional Qualities" (17 items) (min 17, max 85) which includes expressions describing different aspects of the nursing profession, and "Professional Status" (5 items) (min=5, max=25) consisting of expressions that include the position of the profession in society. "Professional Qualities" sub-dimension; contains expressions describing different aspects of the profession such as nursing is a profession that requires intensive communication, self-sacrifice, has independent practices, is knowledge-based, skill-based, satisfying, tiring, stressful, harsh working conditions, teamwork, use of technology, use of problem-solving skills, and science-based profession that requires a

higher education. The "Professional Status" sub-dimension on the other hand; consists of expressions that include the position of nursing among other health professions, its prestige, and its place in society. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.83, and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the subscales was 0.85 for "Professional Qualities", and 0.79 for "Professional Status". The increase in the total score obtained from the scale indicates that the perception of the profession is positive (min=22, max=110). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was found 0.87 in this study. In addition cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.82 for "Professional Qualities" and 0.85 for "Professional Status" in this study (Eşer et al., 2008).

The data of the study was collected through the Individual Identification Form and PNPS after the students who accepted to participate in the study were informed about the research. The data was collected via online survey method through the internet.

2.3. Ethical Consideration

Ethics committee approval was obtained from the Non-Clinical Scientific Research Ethics Committee of İzmir Demokrasi University (Decision no: 2020/22-1; Decision date: 27/11/2020). Written permission was received from the researchers who developed the PNPS. In addition, informed consent from the volunteer students were also obtained. This study was conducted according to the principles of Helsinki Declaration.

2.4. Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyzes of the study were made in JASP (Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program) 0.14.1. package program. The conformity of the quantitative variables to the normal distribution was examined using the Shapiro- Wilk test. Data analysis was performed by using non-parametric tests such as Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis test and Bonferroni corrected Mann Whitney- U test. Results with a p value below 0.05 were considered as statistically significant.

3. RESULTS

The average age of the students was $19.49 + 0.101$, and 62.8% of them were educated in the first grade (Table 1). It was found that 62.8% of the students preferred the nursing in the first order (Table 2).

Total score of the PNPS was 87.60 ± 9.03, Professional Qualities sub-dimension score was 66.90 ± 7.46, and Professional Status score was 20.69 ± 2.44 (Table 3). There was a statistically significant difference between the gender ($p<0.001$), class ($p=0.001$) and residence ($p<0.05$) regarding Professional Qualities and scale total score. The related scale score was found to be higher in women. There was a difference in the relevant scale only between those living in cities and metropolises ($p=0.001$).

Table 1. Socio-demographical Characteristics of Students (n=183)

Variables		Mean $\pm$ Sd	
Age		19.49 $\pm$ 0.101	
		n	**%**
Gender	Female	127	69.4
	Male	56	30.6
Grade	1st Grade	115	62.8
	2nd Grade	55	30.1
	3rd Grade	13	7.1
Type of graduated high school	Regular high school	2	1.1
	Vocational high school	11	6.0
	Anatolian high school	134	73.2
	Science high school	26	14.2
	Other	10	5.5
Place of residence	Village	26	14.2
	District	58	31.7
	City	43	23.5
	Metropolis	56	30.6
Mother's education level	Illiterate	35	19.1
	Literate	7	3.8
	Primary education	106	57.9
	High school	20	10.9
	Undergraduate	15	8.2
Father's education level	Illiterate	5	2.7
	Literate	14	7.7
	Primary education	106	58
	High school	31	16.9
	Undergraduate	27	14.8
Income rate	Income less than expenses	44	24.0
	Income equals expense	110	60.1
	Income more than expenses	29	15.8

Table 2. Students' Views on the Nursing Profession (n=183)

Views		n	%
Nursing Preference Order	First preference order	115	62.8
	Second preference order	9	4.9
	Third preference order	7	3.8
	Fourth preference order	4	2.2
	Fifth preference order	3	1.6
	Sixth preference order and above	45	24.6
Willingness of Choosing the Nursing Profession	Chose willingly	123	67.2
	Chose not willingly	60	32.8
Influential Person in Choosing the Nursing Profession	Myself	118	64.5
	Family	49	26.8
	Relatives	2	1.1
	Friends	4	2.2
	Teachers	10	5.5
Availability of a Health Worker in the Family	Yes	62	33.9
	No	121	66.1
Student's View on Nursing Profession	Positive	92	50.3
	Partially Negative	71	38.8
	Negative	20	10.9
Student's Sense of Nursing Profession	Like	149	81.4
	Dislike	34	18.6
Student's Opinion on Working as a Nurse After Graduation	Yes	164	89.6
	No	19	10.4
Reason for Choosing Nursing Profession	Love to help	57	31.1
	To have a profession	10	5.5
	Having enough score	18	9.8
	Nursing has good facilities	73	39.9
	Have an interest in nursing	25	13.7
Field of Study in the Future	Academician	72	39.3
	Hospital	101	55.2
	Family health center	8	4.4
	Private health institution	2	1.1
Satisfaction with Choosing the Nursing Profession	Yes	152	83.1
	No	31	16.9

Association Membership Related to Nursing	Yes	152	83.1
Profession	No	31	16.9
Status of Recommending the Nursing Profession	Yes	147	80.3
	No	35	19.7

Table 3. Students' Nursing Profession Perception Scale Total and Sub-Dimensional Scores (n=183)

	Mean ± Std. Deviation	**Median (Min – Max)***
Professional Qualification	66.90 ± 7.46	67 (42 - 85)
Professional Status	20.69 ± 2.44	21 (14 - 25)
Total Points	87.60 ± 9.03	88 (56 - 110)

*Mann Whitney U test; Mean ± Standard Deviation / Median (Min-Max)

There was a statistically significant difference regarding Professional Qualities and total score between those who loved the nursing profession and those who did not (p<0.05) and those who were satisfied with studying in the nursing department and those who were not (p<0.05). The related scale score was found to be higher in those who were satisfied with their department and love the nursing profession. There was also a statistically significant difference in terms of Professional Qualities between those who recommend nursing to others and those who do not (p<0.05). Relevant scale score was found to be higher in those who thought to recommend (Table 4).

Table 4. Comparison of the Nursing Profession Perception Scale Total and Sub-Dimensional Scores with Preschool Professional Thought and Nursing Love Status

	Preschool Professional Thought						
	Positive	**Partially Negative**	**Negative**	**p****	**I adopt nursing**	**I don't adopt nursing**	**P***
Professional Qualification	67.75 ± 6.87 67.5 (55-85)	66.41 ± 7.07 67 (43-82)	64.75 ± 10.70 63 (42-85)	0,322	67.80 ± 6.56 68 (55-85)	62.97 ± 9.71 60.5 (42-85)	0.004
Professional Status	20.63 ± 2.47 21 (14-25)	20.75 ± 2.22 21 (15-25)	20.80 ± 3,05 21.5 (14-25)	0,737	20.79 ± 2.37 21 (14-25)	20.26 ± 2.69 21 (14-25)	0.360

Total	88.38 ±	87.15 ±	85.55 ±	0,564	88.59 ± 7.99	83.24 ±	0.008
Point	8.20	8.65	13.22		88	11.78	
	88	89	83		(71-108)	79.5	
	(71-108)	(62-106)	(56-110)			(56-110)	

* Mann Whitney U test; Mean ± Standard Deviation / Median (Min-Max) ** Kruskal Wallis test; Mean ± Standard Deviation / Median (Min-Max); p < 0.05

4. DISCUSSION

Being successful and professionalizing in most of the professions is closely related to choosing the profession knowingly and willingly (Sabancıoğulları and Doğan, 2012, pp. 275-282; Özsoy, 2000, pp. 1-19). In our country, having the profession fully implemented and fulfilled to advance and raise the status of the nursing profession has great importance. For this reason, people who choose these professions should choose wisely and know, accept and love the profession well (Andsoy et al., 2012, pp. 125; Yılmaz et al., 2014, pp. 130-139). In our study, it was determined that 67.2% of them chose the nursing profession willingly. Similar to our study, in the study of Tüfekci and Yıldız (2009), when the students' preference for nursing school was examined, it was determined that 52.7% of them voluntarily preferred it (Tüfekci and Yıldız, 2009, pp. 33).

In our study, 81.4% of the students reported that they liked nursing and 89.6% of them wanted to work as a nurse after graduation. Also, in the study of Tüfekci and Yıldız (2009), 85% of the students stated that they liked the nursing profession and 96.2% stated that they wanted to continue their professional life as a nurse (Tüfekci and Yıldız, 2009, pp. 34). In our study, it was seen that 62.8% of the students preferred the nursing in the first place. Similarly, it was determined that students ranked nursing in the top five preferences (Yücel et al., 2011, pp. 5; Eşer et al., 2008, pp. 20; Güven and Ünsal, 2020, pp. 52-61).

As a result of our research, the rate of those who preferred the nursing department with their own decision was found to be 64.5%, and the rate of those who preferred it with the influence of their family was 26.8%. Different from the findings of our study, Bölükbaş (2018) stated in his research that the students decided to choose the nursing profession with the family in the first place, their own decisions in the second place, and the family in the third place (Bölükbaş, 2018, pp. 15).

It is important to have a positive perception and attitude towards that profession in adapting to the profession and maintaining a productive working life (Güven and Ünsal, 2020, pp. 52-61). Studies in the literature have found that nursing students have positive perceptions of their profession (Yücel et al., 2011, pp. 7; Cerit and Çoşkun, 2018, pp. 286-287; Eşer et al., 2008, pp. 22-23; Tüfekci and Yıldız, 2009, pp. 31-37). Students' positive perceptions about the

nursing profession have an important place in their acquisition of knowledge and skills regarding the profession during the education process, in adopting professional values and reflecting them in their professional practices.

It is stated that having a positive opinion about the future of the profession and finding the profession suitable for oneself, positively affects motivation in business life, commitment to work, and thus job satisfaction (Yılmaz et al., 2014, pp. 136). In our study, when asked in which field they want to work after graduation; 55.2% of them stated that they wanted to work as a nurse in the hospital, and 39.3% of them wanted to pursue an academic career. Similar to our study, in the study of Yücel et al. (2011) it was stated that most of the students want to work as nurses in the hospital after graduation (Yücel et al., 2011, pp. 6).

In our study, it was determined that 67.2% of them chose the nursing profession willingly and 83.1% of them were satisfied with studying in the nursing department. Similar to the findings of our study, studies in the literature have shown that students' thoughts before and after they come to school increase positively (Turgay et al., 2005, pp. 56-58; Güven and Ünsal, 2020, pp. 52-61). Student nurses need to integrate their personal and professional values during the education process in the positive development of nurses' perception of their profession. In this process, the student internalizes the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and ethical standards related to nursing and transforms them into behaviors (Sabancıoğulları and Doğan, 2012, pp. 277). In addition, the fact that students love and adopt the profession makes them think that they will be more successful in the profession, they will provide quality patient care, they will respect people and society, and they will contribute to the development of nursing (Bölükbaş, 2018, pp. 15).

In our study, when the reasons for choosing the nursing profession are examined; 39.9% of them stated that they preferred the nursing department because they had more job opportunities and 31.1% of them liked to help people. In the study of Turgay et al., it was stated that 45.3% of the students preferred nursing to acquire a profession and 6.3% to help people (Turgay et al., 2005, pp. 58).

In our study, the total mean score of the students' PNPS was 87.60 ± 9.03, the Professional Qualities sub-dimension score was 66.90 ± 7.46, and the Professional Status sub-dimension score was 20.69 ± 2.44. Yücel et al. (2011) also determined the PNPS score of the students studying with the classical system as 87.57 ± 17.27 as a result of their studies (Yücel et al., 2011, pp. 7). Similar to our study, in Cerit and Çoşkun's (2018) study, it was stated that nursing students' total score on PNPS was 88.60 (sd=10.40), Professional Qualities sub-dimension mean score was 72.41 (sd=8.06), and Professional Status sub-dimension mean score was determined as 16.19 (sd=4.62) (Cerit and Çoşkun, 2018, pp. 286). In the study of Yücel et al. (2011), the total mean score of PNPS in students studying with the classical system; was stated to be 87.57 ± 17.27 at a high level (Yücel et al., 2011, pp. 7). According to these findings,

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which are similar to our study, it is possible to say that the nurse students' perception of the nursing profession is positive. The fact that the level of perception of the profession changes as medium or high; may be related to the differences in the quality and quantity of the places and samples of the researches.

In our study, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the total mean score of PNPS and the sub-dimension of Professional Qualities, as well as between gender and class. In addition, there is no statistically significant difference between the residence groups in terms of Professional Status. In the study of Güven and Ünsal (2020), it was reported that there was statistical significance between the sub-dimension of Professional Qualities and gender, class, but unlike our study, there was a significant difference between the sub-dimension of Professional Status and the place where the students lived for a long time (Güven and Ünsal, 2020, pp. 52-61).

In our study, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between age groups in terms of Professional Qualities, Professional Status, and scale total score. In the study of Kaya and Dalgıç (2019), different from our study, it was determined that the total mean score of PNPS was significantly higher in 18-year-old student nurses (Kaya and Dalgıç, 2019, pp. 69-77). Since the age of the students will increase as the grade level increases, this finding shows us that there is a significant difference between the age groups and the total score averages of the scale. As can be seen, the results of the research contain differences. In this case, it is thought that it is due to the differences in the variables such as the place of the research and the included sample being in different classes.

In our study, there is no statistically significant difference in terms of Professional Status scores between those who choose the profession voluntarily and those who do not. In our study, there was no statistically significant difference between thinking about the profession before starting school and the Professional Status score. In addition, there is no statistically significant difference in terms of Professional Status scores between those who are satisfied with studying in the nursing department and those who are not. In our study, there is a statistically significant difference in terms of Professional Qualities and total scores between those who love the nursing profession and those who do not. In addition, there is a statistically significant difference between men and women in terms of total scale scores. Unlike the findings of our study, in the study of Güven and Ünsal (2020), it was indicated that there is a relevance between the Professional Status sub-dimension and the willingness to choose nursing, between the Professional Status sub-dimension and the thoughts about nursing before coming to school, and between the Professional Status sub-dimension and the thoughts about nursing after starting the department (Güven and Ünsal, 2020, pp. 52-61). Similar to the findings of our study, it was stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the total scale score averages of the PNPS and the Professional Qualities sub-dimension and their feelings about nursing, also

there was a statistically significant difference between the total scale mean scores of the PNPS and gender (Güven and Ünsal, 2020, pp. 52-61).

Professional perception is expected to develop positively in the education process (Çelik et al., 2013, pp. 147-153; Björkström et al., 2008, pp. 1380-1391). Thus; In our study, the total mean score of PNPS was higher in the second and third grades than in the first grade. Also, in the study of Güven and Ünsal (2020), the positive thoughts of fourth-year students about Professional Qualities were found to be higher than first-year students (Güven and Ünsal, 2020, pp. 52-61).

5. CONCLUSION

As a result of the study, it was determined that nursing students' perception of the nursing profession is high. We think that courses and subjects that will positively affect the perception of the nursing profession should be added to the nursing curriculum to improve the perception of the profession of nursing students. In addition, it is thought that the encouragement of students to scientific and social activities during their education by the instructors may increase their perceptions of the profession. It is recommended that the research be repeated at all grade levels with a different larger sample.

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