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FIRST-GRADE NURSING STUDENTS' ATTITUDES FOR NURSING PROFESSION AND PERCEPTIONS OF NURSING IMAGE

Abstract

The aim of the study was to evaluate the attitudes for nursing profession and perceptions of nursing image of first grade nursing students. The research was of descriptive type. The study was carried out between March and May 2020, in the nursing faculty at Inonu University. No sample selection was made in the study, it was targeted to reach all first-grade students. The research was completed with a total of 251 students. In data collection; "Descriptive Information Form" containing the socio-demographic characteristics of the students, " Attitude Scale for Nursing Profession (ASNP)" and " Nursing Image Scale (NIS)" were used. It was found that the students got a total of 152.17 ± 18.2 points from ASNP and 70.97 ± 5.43 points from NIS. It was found that there were significant differences between the variables of choosing nursing willingly, liking the profession and the perception of nursing image in society, ASNP and NIS score averages.

Keywords: Attitude, Image, Nursing profession, Nursing student

HEMŞİRELİK BÖLÜMÜ BİRİNCİ SINIF ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN HEMŞİRELİK MESLEĞİNE YÖNELİK TUTUMLARI VE İMAJ ALGILARI

Özet

Bu araştırma hemşirelik birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin hemşirelik mesleğine yönelik tutumları ve imaj algılarını değerlendirmek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırma tanımlayıcı tiptedir. Araştırma, İnönü Üniversitesi Hemşirelik Fakültesinde

öğrenim gören birinci sınıf öğrenciler ile Mart-Mayıs 2020 tarihleri arasında yürütülmüştür. Araştırmada örneklem seçimine gidilmemiş, tüm öğrencilere ulaşmak hedeflenmiştir. Toplam 251 öğrenci ile araştırma tamamlanmıştır. Verilerin toplanmasında, öğrencilerin sosyo-demografik özelliklerini içeren “Tanıtıcı Bilgi Formu” ve “Hemşirelik Mesleğine Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği (HMYTÖ)” ve “Hemşirelik İmajı Ölçeği (HİÖ)” kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada öğrencilerin HMYTÖ’nden toplam 152.17 ± 18.2 puan, HİÖ’nden ise toplam 70.97 ± 5.43 puan aldıkları belirlenmiştir. Öğrencilerin mesleğe yönelik tutumlarının olumlu olduğu, mesleki imaj algılarının ise oldukça yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir. Hemşirelik bölümünü isteyerek seçme, mesleği sevmeye ve toplumda hemşirelik imajı düşüncesi değişkenleri ile HMYTÖ ve HİÖ puan ortalaması arasındaki farkın anlamlı olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Tutum, İmaj, Hemşirelik mesleği, Hemşirelik öğrencisi

1. INTRODUCTION

Choosing a profession is one of the most important decisions that a person makes in their life. People's decisions about the choice of profession are largely influenced by the attitudes of themselves and society towards that profession (Çoban & Kaşıkçı, 2011). Individuals develop an attitude towards their profession over time by reflecting a number of psychological actions that they develop from a thought and emotional point of view into their behaviour. Attitudes that affect individuals and professions in the social structure are important in choosing, training and performing the profession and are the most important determinants of professional success (Zencir & Eşer, 2016). Many definitions of the attitude that underlies and affects behaviours have been made. An attitude is a mental, emotional, and behavioural reaction, pre-tendency that an individual organizes based on experience, knowledge, emotions, and motives against himself or any object, social subject, or event around him (İnceoğlu, 2011). Attitude is one of the affective factors that direct individuals' behaviour. The positive or negative attitudes that occur in the cognitive and affective perceptions of the individual as a result of experiences and experiences direct the behaviours and lives of the individual (Erkuş, 2020). The attitude of nurses towards their profession is closely related to the status of the group that makes up that profession in society. The current status of a profession is closely related to the image of the group that constitutes that profession in society, and this image is of great importance for members of the profession (Kahraman et al., 2015).

Professional image is an important value for every profession. In the formation of the image of the profession, the attitudes and behaviours, achievements, communication styles of the professional employees play an important role (Aşçı, 2017; Özata & Aslan, 2011). The opinion of the society about the image of nursing affects the nursing profession, profession members and professional candidates positively or negatively (Çelik et al., 2013). In order for nursing students to develop a positive professional attitude, they must first create a positive image perception (Seval & Sönmez, 2020). It is important for nursing students to have a positive perception of professional image and develop the correct attitude, since they are the people who will do the profession in the future. After the study, understanding students' attitudes for nursing profession, perceptions of nursing image, and development towards the profession can help nurse educators evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the training program. In the literature, there are some research that deals with the attitudes for nursing profession and

perception of nursing image of nursing students separately. However, the number of studies in which these two concepts, which are closely related to each other, are evaluated together is rare. In addition, evaluating the attitudes of first-year students who are just starting the profession, introducing the profession towards students and society, and raising the nursing image are valuable in terms of.

The aim of the study was to evaluate the attitudes for nursing profession and perceptions of nursing image of first grade nursing students.

METHOD

Type of research

This research is of the descriptive type.

Population-Sampling

This study, the first grade of nursing students studying in a faculty of nursing was located in the east of Turkey, it was carried out between March and May 2020. The population of the research was composed of first year students. The sample selection method was not performed, it was targeted to reach the entire population. Students who did not volunteer to participate in the study (35) and completed the data collection form incompletely (14) were excluded from the study. Research was conducted with a total of 251 students. 83.6% of the population had been reached.

Collection of Data

In data collection; "Descriptive Information Form" containing the socio-demographic characteristics of the students, " Attitude Scale for Nursing Profession (ASNP)" and " Nursing Image Scale (NIS)" were used. Data was collected from students online. After the researcher created the data collection form from Google Forms, she shared it to students via WhatsApp. At the beginning of the data collection form, an informational text about the research was written, and written consent was obtained from those who wanted to participate in the research.

Introductory Information Form

This form, consisting of a total of 9 questions one of which is open-ended, containing the socio-demographic characteristics of nursing students was created by the researcher.

Attitude Scale for Nursing Profession (ASNP)

This scale was developed by Ipek Çoban and Kaşıkçı in order to evaluate people's attitudes towards the nursing profession. ASNP consists of three sub-factors, these are: "Properties of nursing profession", "Preference to nursing profession" and "General position of nursing profession". ASNP is a five-point likert scale and positive items are scored as "1 - I disagree at all" and "5-I fully agree", while negative items are scored conversely. From the scale, between 40 and 200 points are taken. If the total score is high the positive attitude is high too. If the total score on the scale is above 120, it can be said that people have a positive attitude. In the validity-reliability study of the scale, the Cronbach alpha value was calculated as 0.91 (Çoban & Kaşıkçı, 2011). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.92.

Nursing Image Scale (NIS)

NIS was developed by Özsoy in the form of a question form in order to determine the image of individuals about the nursing profession, and by Çınar and Demir in 2009, it was turned into a scale and reliability of validity was made. NIS, consisting of a total of 28 items and three sub-dimensions, is of the three-category likert type. There are 7 items in the "General view" sub-dimension, 6 items in the "Communication" sub-dimension, and 15 items in the "Professional and educational qualifications" sub-dimension. The highest score on the scale is 84. The increase in the total point means that the image of nursing is positive. Çınar and Demir found that Cronbach's alpha was 0.81 (Çınar & Demir, 2010). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.87.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was done using SPSS 23.0 package program. Descriptive statistical methods (number, percentage) were used to evaluate socio-demographic characteristics. Scale score means were given by mean and standard deviation. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess the suitability of the data for normal distribution. In variables that didn't meet the normal distribution test assumption ($p>0.05$), was used non-parametric tests. The Student t-test was used to compare binary groups, and the ANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis h test were used to compare three and more groups. Pearson correlation test was used to evaluate the relationship between ASNP and NIS.

Ethical Approval

In order to conduct the research, ethical approval was obtained from ethics board of university (Decision no: 1619) and the institution's permission was obtained from the faculty of nursing. Students are free to participate in the research, the purpose of the research and what purposes the results obtained will be used by explaining, written consent has been obtained.

RESULTS

The average age of the students was determined to be 19.0 ± 1.4 . 71.3% of the students were female, 81.7% had a medium income level, 82.1% were Anatolian high school graduates, 55.4% wrote nursing as their first choice, 40.6% chose the nursing department willingly, 51.8% were love their profession, and 64.9% of them have a negative perception of nursing image in society (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of students

Socio-demographic variables		Number (251)	%	X±SD
Age				19.0±1.4
Gender	Female	179	71.3	
	Male	72	28.7	
Economic status	High income	27	10.8	
	Medium	205	81.7	
	Low income	19	7.6	
Which school you graduated from?	Anatolian High School	206	82.1	
	Science High School	12	4.8	
	Vocational High School	21	8.4	
	Associate degree	8	3.2	
	Another undergraduate	4	1.6	

	program		
Nursing departments of preference order	1st choice	139	55.4
	2nd choice	38	15.1
	3rd choice	16	6.4
	4th choice	14	5.6
	5th choice	11	4.4
	6.preference and above	33	13.2
Status of voluntarily choose the nursing department	Yes	102	40.6
	No	89	35.5
	Undecided	60	23.9
Status of liking the nursing profession	Yes	130	51.8
	No	33	13.1
	Undecided	88	35.1
The reason to choose the department of nursing*	Job opportunities	146	58.2
	Interest in the profession	41	16.3
	Exam score is sufficient	21	8.4
	Family insistence	26	10.4
	Other	7	2.8
Nursing image perception in society	Positive	88	35.1
	Negative	163	64.9

* More than one answer was given

The total points of ASNP the students were found to be 152.17 ± 18.2 . It was determined that the students received 73.54 ± 9.54 points from the "Properties of nursing profession" sub-dimension, 45.70 ± 8.77 points from the "Preference to nursing profession" sub-dimension, and 32.92 ± 3.84 points from the "General position of nursing profession" sub-dimension. It was viewed that the students' attitudes were positive. It was determined that students received a score of 70.97 ± 5.43 from NIS, and their professional image was also quite high. In addition, it was determined that they received 13.31 ± 1.92 points from the "General view" sub-dimension, 16.14 ± 2.37 points from the "Communication" sub-dimension, and 41.38 ± 2.91 points from the "Professional and educational qualifications" sub-dimension (Table 2).

Table 2. ASNP and NIS scales mean scores of students

Scale	Min-Max	X $\pm$ SD
Properties of nursing profession	24.0-90.0	73.54 ± 9.54
Preference to nursing profession	17.0-65.0	45.70 ± 8.77
General position of nursing profession	21.0-43.0	32.92 ± 3.84
ASNP	83.0-190.0	152.17 ± 18.2
General view	9.0-18.0	13.31 ± 1.92
Communication	6.0-18.0	16.14 ± 2.37
Professional and educational qualifications	30.0-45.0	41.38 ± 2.91
NIS	52.0-81.0	70.97 ± 5.43

X: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation

A comparison of the socio-demographic characteristics of students and the average score of ASNP and NIS is shown in Table 3. There was a positive and weak significant relationship between age and ASNP ($p < 0.05$). As age increases, students' positive attitudes have also increased. It was detected that the difference between gender, income level, the order of preference and they graduated from school and the average of ASNP score averages was not

statistically significant ($p>0.05$), but female students, those with a medium income level, the students who wrote the nursing department as their first choice, and those with an associate's degree had more positive attitudes towards the profession.

There was the difference between willingly choosing the nursing department, liking the nursing profession and ASNP was statistically significant ($p<0.05$). In the further analysis, it was detected that students who do not choose the department willingly and do not like the nursing profession create a significant difference. The difference between nursing image in society and ASNP was statistically significant ($p<0.05$). Students who felt that the nursing image in society was negative had a more negative attitude.

It was detected that the difference between the variables of age, income level, the school they graduated from, and the order of preference of students and the NIS was not statistically significant ($p>0.05$). There was a significant difference between gender, willingly choosing the nursing department, liking the nursing profession, and nursing image in society and the mean NIS scores ($p<0.05$). It was observed that the women students, those who willingly choose the nursing department, those who love the profession, and the students who think that the nursing image in the society is positive were higher the mean scores of NIS (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of students' mean scores on ASNP and NIS by variable

	ASNP			NIS		
	Mean±SD	Test	p	Mean±SD	Test	p
Age		r: .125*	0.049		r: -.101	0.112
Gender						
Female	153.2±18.0	t=1.449	0.149	74.3±5.0	t=3.994	0.000
Male	149.5±18.8			70.8±6.7		
Economic status						
High income	146.9±18.8			74.2±6.9		
Medium	152.9±18.3	$\chi^2=2.425$	0.297	73.3±5.7	KW=4.330	0.115
Low income	151.1±16.6			70.8±6.3		
Which school you graduated from?						
Anatolian High School	153.5±18.0			73.0±6.0		
Science High School	157.2±17.1			75.3±5.3		
Vocational High School	158.7±18.9	$\chi^2=2.247$	0.216	73.4±3.8	KW=3.176	0.483
Associate degree	159.3±15.2			73.5±5.9		
Another undergraduate program	151.0±16.0			75.6±3.7		
Nursing department's of preference order						
1st choice	153.9±17.2			73.2±5.8		

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2nd choice	150.4±18.0			71.9±5.3		
3rd choice	153.6±23.9	$\chi^2=10.996$	0.051	70.6±5.3	KW=7.135	0.211
4th choice	152.2±25.6			72.3±3.9		
5th choice	139.6±13.4			70.9±5.4		
6.preference and above	149.6±16.6			69.9±4.0		
Status of voluntarily choose the nursing department						
Yes	160.5±14.2			74.0±5.4		
No	141.9±18.8	F=30.740	0.000	71.2±6.8	F=3.622	0.029
Undecided	153.0±16.0			73.4±5.4		
Status of liking the nursing profession						
Yes	159.5±15.0			74.2±5.2		
No	130.9±20.2	F=46.612	0.000	69.1±7.9	F=8.146	0.000
Undecided	149.2±14.4			72.2±5.6		
Nursing image perception in society						
Positive	156.5±16.0	t=2.824	0.005	73.8±6.7	t=2.230	0.012
Negative	149.8±18.9			69.6±5.5		

t: Independent Samples T Test, F: One-way ANOVA, KW: Kruskal Wallis H test

DISCUSSION

Professional attitude and perception have a major impact on the development of students and the quality of the nursing profession (Xing et al., 2003). For this reason, this study was conducted to evaluate the attitudes for nursing profession and perceptions of nursing image of first grade nursing students. Students got 152.17±18.2 points from ASNP. Çoban and Kaşıkçı, who conducted the scale validity and reliability study, stated that people have a positive attitude for nursing profession if the total score obtained from ASNP is above 120 (Çoban & Kaşıkçı, 2011). In this study, when we looked at the average ASNP score of students, it was seen that students had a positive attitude. Zencir and Eşer determined that nursing students have a positive attitude according to ASNP sub-dimensions (Zencir & Eşer, 2016). Güven's research with high school seniors found that students' attitudes were positive (Güven, 2019). The finding in the literature that students have a positive attitude towards profession is consistent with our research result (Al Mutair & Redwan, 2016; Ali et al., 2012; Güven, 2019; Koushali et al., 2012; Zencir & Eşer, 2016; Zhang & Petrini, 2008). The research result is valuable in terms of showing that students' attitudes for nursing profession have changed positively in Turkish society.

There was a positive and weakly correlation between age and the ASNP score average. It was found that as the age increased, the attitude for the nursing profession also increased positively.

Seval and Sönmez detected that as the age of the students increased, the positive attitude towards nursing also increased (Seval & Sönmez, 2020). Tarhan et al., found that it was no significant difference between age and ASNP (Tarhan et al., 2016). Zhang and Petrini found that there was a very weak negative correlation between age and attitude for nursing professional, but the relationship between them was not statistically significant (Zhang & Petrini, 2008). Due to the different results obtained, it is recommended that the subject be reconsidered in new research.

In this study, it was detected that the difference between gender, income level, the order of preference and they graduated from school and the average of ASNP score averages was not statistically significant ($p>0.05$). However, ASNP point averages differed in some groups. Female students were found to have a higher average score. Law and Arthur detected that women were more interested in nursing as a career (Law & Arthur, 2003). Suluhan et al., determined that gender positively affects attitudes for nursing profession (Suluhan et al., 2020). It is known that during the history of nursing, mostly women performed this profession, while men performed nursing in very small numbers (Law & Arthur, 2003). Although nursing is perceived as a woman-oriented profession, it has been observed that the number of males in the profession has increased in recently (Lou et al., 2007). In this study, it is believed that recent changes and developments have been effective in the nonexistence of significant differences between female students and male students in terms of attitude for nursing professional.

It was found that more than half of students wrote the nursing department as their first choice. It was detected that the difference between the order of preference and ASNP was not statistically significant ($p>0.05$). In our country, there has recently been a significant increase in the proportion of students choosing the nursing department (Demiray et al., 2013; Seval & Sönmez, 2020; Zencir & Eşer, 2016). In this study, unlike studies conducted in Turkey, the vast majority of students wrote nursing as the first choice. In the literature, students mostly wrote nursing within the fifth or tenth choice (Bölükbaş, 2018; Özdemir & Şahin, 2016; Özveren et al., 2017; Seval & Sönmez, 2020). It is believed that a recent change in the professional perspective in society, an excess of job opportunities, and an increase in the need for health workers along with the pandemic process can also be effective in making nursing the first preferred department.

There was a statistically significant difference between the variables of willingly choosing the nursing department and liking the nursing profession, and the ASNP and NIS. In Göl's research, it was detected that the variables of willingly choosing the profession and being satisfied with studying in the nursing department are factors affecting attitude towards the profession. It was observed that the attitudes of those who chose nursing by chance and were not satisfied with studying in the department were more negative (Göl, 2018). Students who willingly chose the nursing department and liking the nursing profession had a high nursing image. In the study conducted by Dost with nurses, it was found that the nursing image perceptions of nurses with a high level of professional satisfaction were more positive (Dost & Bahçecik, 2014). In another study, it was found that there was a positive correlation between satisfaction with nursing and positive nursing image (Varaei et al., 2012). It is thought that choosing the profession willingly and a positive attitude can contribute to the increase of the nursing image.

In this study, 64.9% of the students think that the image of nursing is perceived negatively in society. There was a statistically significant difference between the nursing image in the society

and ASNP and NIS. The students who think that the nursing image was positive in the society had higher ASNP and NIS score. Tosunöz et al., noted that students who stated that society had a positive view of nursing had a higher rate of choosing the nursing profession (Tosunöz et al., 2019). Takase et al. (2001) found that nurses' self-image perceptions were higher than public image. The difference between these image perceptions negatively affected the job performance and satisfaction of the nurses. It can be said that the perspective of any profession in a society is one of the factors that is effective in choosing the profession. It is very important to inform the society correctly, to eliminate the differences in educational levels, to strengthen professional organization and autonomy in order to increase the perception of nursing and nursing image of the society. In order to improve society's perception of nursing professional and nursing image, it is very important to inform society correctly, to eliminate differences in educational levels, to strengthen professional organization and autonomy (Price et al., 2013). Nursing schools are an important tool in informing the society through students and educating them to create a modern nursing image (Glerean et al., 2017).

In this study, students got a total score of 70.97 ± 5.43 from NIS and the nursing image was quite high. Similar to our research findings, Özdelikara et al., found that nursing students got a total score of 71.39 ± 6.68 from NIS (Özdelikara et al., 2015). A study conducted with university students in California also found that they perceive the image of nursing positively depending on criteria such as job security and good income (Seago et al., 2006). In another study conducted in Jordan, it was determined that nursing students generally have a significant positive perception about nursing image (Al Jarrah, 2013). It is stated that the public image of nursing professional in a country is one of the key influences on the production of nursing human resources (Squires et al., 2019). In this study, it is a favourable result that the nursing image of first year nursing students is high.

In this study, there was no statistically significant difference between the variables of age, income level, the school graduated from, and the order of preference and the mean scores of the NIS ($p > 0.05$). Karaman and his colleagues found that there was no significant difference between the variables of students' class, income status, the school in which they graduated and being a health member in the family and the image of nursing (Karaman et al, 2020). However, there was a significant difference between gender, willingly choosing the nursing department, liking nursing profession, and the perception of nursing image in society and the mean scores of the NIS ($p < 0.05$). Female students' perceptions of nursing image were higher than male. Karaman et al. found that female students' perceptions of nursing image were higher than male students (Karaman et al, 2020). However, in the constantly evolving and changing world, the society's view of the nursing profession is also changing and developing day by day. It is an inevitable reality that nursing profession can be applied by both sexes due to the fact that it is a dynamic process based on interpersonal relationships today and because of gender equality, which is one of the professional criteria (Kahraman et al., 2015). A recent study in our country found that male students' perception of nursing image is significantly higher than female students (41). This finding may indicate that occupational image perception associated with gender is beginning to change in society.

CONCLUSION

It was determined that the attitude for nursing profession and nursing images of first-year students of nursing department were positive. It was determined that willingly choosing the nursing department, liking the nursing profession and the perception of nursing image in the society were factors affecting the attitude for nursing profession and nursing image. In addition, it was found that female students' attitude towards nursing and nursing image were more positive. In line with these results, in order to increase the attitude for nursing profession and image of nursing, it is recommended to promote nursing more accurately to students and society.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declare that have no conflict of interests.

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