



Perception of Nursing Students towards Nursing Profession: A Cross-sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Nursing is a cornerstone of the healthcare system, providing essential services that contribute to patient recovery, health promotion, and community well-being. The perceptions held by nursing students are crucial, as they shape their academic engagement, professional identity, job satisfaction, and even their decision to remain in the field after graduation. Hence, the aim of this study is to identify perception towards nursing profession among nursing students of Nepal Police Hospital School of Health Sciences.

Method: A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional study design was adopted for this study in Nepal Police Hospital School of Health Sciences, Maharajgunj, Kathmandu from March 2025 to August 2025. A census approach was used because the total study population consisted of only 120 participants. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire.

Result: The findings revealed that slightly more than half of the participants (51.7%) had a positive perception of nursing, whereas 48.3% expressed a negative perception.

Conclusion: Slightly more than half of the respondents had positive perception towards nursing profession, the findings highlight the need to improve recognition, appreciation, and working conditions for nurses in Nepal to strengthen professional satisfaction and retention.

Key words: Nursing; Perception; Profession; Student

BACKGROUND

Nursing is an art and a science of caring that focuses on the protection, promotion, and optimization of health as well as a humanitarian service (1). It is a unique profession within the health care sector focused on the care of individuals, families, groups, communities and populations in recognition of the connection of all humanity (1).

Perception is simply the ideas, beliefs, or mental images that people form based on how they see, interpret, or understand something. The Perception of nursing may vary depending on age, educational level, social and professional experience (2).

Nurses face mental, physical, emotional and moral challenges in their employment. Depending on the nurse's work role and setting, it may include accepting the risk of illness, physical abuse, meeting physical demands, managing and supporting the needs of many patients with complex needs, and emotional interactions (3).

The impact of nursing student's perceptions of healthcare teams is unknown (4). Nursing students either possess positive or negative attitudes (5). Based on the current study, nursing students generally had good perspectives toward the nursing profession which is influenced by various factors, including gender, marital status, family status, and

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academic year (6). Young people described the nature of nursing work with poor working conditions, shift work and a limited level of autonomy (7).

A study conducted among 180 nursing students to assess perception toward nursing profession in a selected University in Edo State Nigeria; revealed that the students have better perception towards nursing profession and nursing profession has been more to the positive side than the negative side (8). Similarly, a study conducted among 131 students at Chitwan Medical College, Nepal concluded that the student's perception is getting positive towards nursing profession and majority of the students perceived that nursing is a profession with bright and secured future (9).

Although the nursing profession has made remarkable progress over the years, it still faces ongoing challenges related to its public image. These issues affect nurses' social standing, authority, and their ability to influence healthcare reforms. As a result, this study seeks to identify how nursing students perceive the nursing profession in selected institutions.

METHODS

A descriptive cross-sectional study design was adopted to assess Perception of Nursing Students towards Nursing Profession. All Proficiency Certificate level nursing students from first year to third year were included in this study. A total sample size was 120 in number and census approach was used to collect the data as this is the maximum available number there.

The objectives of the study and data collection process was explained to the respondents and written informed consent was taken from them prior to data collection. They were assured for the confidentiality of the information that it will be used only for the study purpose. Respondents' dignity was maintained by giving right to reject or discontinue from the research study at any time. The data were collected from each respondent by providing a self-administered questionnaire that had been previously used by the researcher.

Perceptions were measured using a 5-point Likert scale consisting of 20 items, including 10 positively worded statements and 10 negatively worded statements. All collected data was checked, reviewed, and organized for the completeness, consistency and accuracy. The data was coded and entered in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 window for analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics: frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation to identify the respondent's socio demographic, profession related information as well as perception towards nursing profession. Chi-square test was applied to find out the associations between perception of nursing students towards nursing profession and selected variables. All the statistically significant was set at p value <0.05.

Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted after getting ethical approval from the Nepal Police Hospital Institutional Review Committee (IRC No. 59-23/2082). Data collection was done from the participants who gave informed consent in Nepal Police Hospital School of Health Sciences, Kathmandu.

RESULTS

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n=120)

Socio-demographic characteristics	Number	Percentage
Age (in years)		
≤ 17	66	55
> 17	54	45
Median = 19		
Sex		
Male	6	5
Female	114	95
Religion		
Hindu	114	95
Buddhist	2	1.7
Muslim	1	0.8
Christian	3	2.5
Marital Status		
Married	2	1.7
Unmarried	118	98.3
Permanent Address		
Urban	80	66.7
Rural	40	33.3
Academic Year		
1 st Year	40	33.3
2 nd Year	40	33.3
3 rd Year	40	33.3

Table 1 shows that among 120 respondents, 55% fall under the age group ≤17 years with median age of 19. Most of the respondents were female (95%) and unmarried (98.3%). Concerning religion, 95% of the respondents were following Hinduism. Regarding academic year 33.3% of the respondents were from 1st year, 2nd year, and 3year respectively.

Table 2 reveals that the majority of respondents (77.5%) had no family members in nursing and were self-motivated to join the profession (85.8%). Less than half of the respondents (43.3%) were interested in bedside nursing and nursing administration, while only 13.3% were interested in teaching institutions. The majority of respondents (85.8%) planned to move abroad for jobs. Likewise, most respondents (96.7%) had plans for higher education. The majority of respondents (91.7%) did not plan to change the nursing profession.

Table 2. Profession-related information of the Respondents (n=120)

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Family Members in Nursing		
Yes	27	22.5
No	93	77.5
Reason to Join Nursing		
Self-motivated	103	85.8
Forced by Parents	14	11.7
Both	3	2.5
Interested Field of Study		
Teaching Institution	16	13.3
Bedside nursing	52	43.3
Nursing Administration	52	43.3
Plan of moving abroad for Job		
Yes	103	85.8
No	16	13.3
Not Sure	1	0.8
Plan for higher Education		
Yes	116	96.7
No	4	3.3
Plan to Change nursing Profession		
Yes	9	7.5
No	110	91.7
Not Sure	1	0.8

Table 3 illustrates that nearly half of the respondents (47.5%) agreed that nursing is a well-appreciated job in society. Half of the respondents (50%) strongly agreed that nursing offers bright prospects abroad. Less than half of the respondents (42.5%) agreed that a nurse serves as a professional liaison between the physician and the patient. About half of the respondents (50.8%) agreed that nursing is a care profession in which ethical standards are maintained. More than half of the respondents (60%) strongly agreed that nursing provides opportunities for personal growth. Similarly, half of the respondents (51.7%) agreed that nursing offers an opportunity to gain due recognition in society. Two-thirds of the respondents (65.8%) strongly agreed that nurses play a vital role in promoting health and preventing diseases. Only one-third of the respondents (27.5%) agreed that the nursing profession is equal to other health professions. More than two-thirds of the respondents (70.8%) strongly agreed that nursing requires compassion, patience, and strength, emphasizing the importance of these qualities in the profession. Additionally, more than one-third of the respondents (30.0%) strongly agreed that good pay and job security positively influence their perception of nursing.

Table 3. Positive Perception towards Nursing Profession of the Respondents (n=120)

Statement	Strongly Disagree No. (%)	Disagree No. (%)	Unsure No. (%)	Agree No. (%)	Strongly Agree No. (%)
A well appreciated job in the society	1 (0.8)	7 (5.8)	18 (15)	57 (47.50)	37 (30.8)
A way to have bright prospects at abroad	1 (0.8)	0	12 (10)	47 (39.2)	60 (50)
A nurse is a professional liaison between the physician and the patient	6 (5.0)	9 (7.5)	10 (8.3)	51 (42.5)	44 (36.7)
A care profession in which ethical standards of care are maintained	0	2 (1.7)	4 (3.3)	61 (50.8)	53 (44.2)
An opportunity for personal growth	0	1 (0.8)	11 (9.2)	36 (30)	72 (60)
An opportunity to get due recognition in society	0	5 (4.2)	25 (20.8)	62 (51.7)	28 (23.3)
Helping in the promotion of health and prevention of diseases	0	0	1 (0.8)	40 (33.3)	79 (65.8)
The nursing profession is equal to all other health profession	2 (1.7)	37 (30.8)	21 (17.5)	27 (22.5)	33 (27.5)
Requires compassion, patience and strength	0	0	0	35 (29.2)	85 (70.8)
Good pay and good job security	6 (5.0)	25 (20.8)	24 (20.0)	29 (24.2)	36 (30.0)

Table 4. Negative Perception towards Nursing Profession of the Respondents (n=120)

Statement	Strongly Disagree No. (%)	Disagree No. (%)	Unsure No. (%)	Agree No. (%)	Strongly Agree No. (%)
The nursing profession is an extremely tough profession that does not receive enough appreciation	8 (6.7)	30 (25.0)	11 (9.2)	34 (28.3)	37 (30.8)
Not an important profession in patient care	73 (60.8)	44 (36.7)	3 (2.5)	0	0
Nurse waste a lot of time being busy doing nothing	79 (65.8)	29 (24.2)	8 (6.7)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.8)
Nurses work is just giving injections and care to a patient	76 (63.3)	41 (34.2)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	0
Nurses only do what the doctor tells them to do without questioning them	56 (46.7)	41 (34.2)	7 (5.8)	13 (10.8)	3 (2.5)
Nurses have limited voices with administrators	17 (14.2)	21 (17.5)	35 (29.2)	36 (30)	11 (9.20)
Nursing profession is for low academic achievers and dull students	84 (70)	32 (26.7)	2 (1.7)	0	2 (1.7)
Anyone can be a nurse easily	64 (53.3)	39 (32.5)	11 (9.20)	2 (1.7)	4 (3.3)
Nursing is not a prestigious job	62 (51.7)	46 (38.3)	10 (8.3)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)
Nursing is an occupation and not a profession	67 (55.8)	43 (35.8)	8 (6.7)	0	2 (1.7)

Table 4 reveals that more than one-third of the respondents (30.8%) strongly agreed that the nursing profession is extremely tough and does not receive enough appreciation. More than half of the respondents (60.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement that nursing is not an important profession in patient care. Two-thirds of the respondents (65.8%) strongly disagreed that nurses waste a lot of time being busy doing nothing. Similarly, two-thirds of the respondents (63.3%) strongly disagreed that nurses' work is limited to giving injections and providing care to patients. Less than half of the respondents (46.7%) strongly disagreed that nurses only do what doctors tell them without questioning. Two-thirds of the respondents (70%) strongly disagreed that the nursing profession is for low academic achievers or dull students. About half of the respondents (53.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement that anyone could easily become a nurse. Similarly, half of the respondents (51.7%) strongly disagreed that nursing is not a prestigious job. Likewise, more than half of the respondents (55.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement that nursing is merely an occupation and not a profession.

Table 5. Level of Perception towards the Profession of the Respondents

Level of Perception	Number	Percentage
Positive perception toward nursing profession	62	51.7
Negative perception toward nursing profession	58	48.3

Table 5 illustrates that more than half of the respondents (51.7%) had a positive perception, whereas 48.3% had a negative perception.

Table 6. Association between Level of Perception and Selected Variable (n = 120)

Variables	Level of Perception		χ2 test	p-value
	Positive Perception No. (%)	Negative perception No. (%)		
Age				
≤ 17	39 (59.1%)	27 (40.9%)	3.273	0.072
> 17	23(42.6%)	31(57.4%)		
Sex				
Male	1(16.7%)	5 (83.3%)	3.098	0.078
Female	61(53.5%)	53(46.5%)		
Marital Status				
Married	62 (52.5%)	56 (47.5%)	2.174	0.140
Unmarried	0(0.0%)	2(100.0%)		
Permanent Address				
Urban	46 (57.5%)	34 (42.5%)	3.270	0.071
Rural	16 (40.0%)	24 (60.0%)		
Academic Year				
1 st Year	25 (62.5%)	15 (37.5%)	3.270	0.195
2 nd Year	17 (42.5%)	23 (57.5%)		
3 rd Year	20 (50.0%)	20 (50.0%)		
Reason to join Nursing				
Self-motivated	51 (49.5%)	52 (50.5%)	2.784	0.249
Forced by parents	10 (71.4%)	4 (28.6%)		
Both	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)		

Table 6 illustrates that there was a no significant association between level of perception with the selected variables of the respondents.

DISCUSSION

The present study provides insight into nursing student's perceptions of the nursing profession. The findings revealed that slightly more than half of the participants (51.7%) had a positive perception towards nursing profession, whereas 48.3% expressed a negative perception. The findings of the present study are consistent with a study conducted in Morang district by Diksha Paudel et al. in 2023, which reported that 51.6% of respondents had a positive perception of the nursing profession (10). Similarly, studies conducted by Wilson Ijayi Midawati and by Dahshan, M., and Youssef, H. in 2018 also found that the majority of nursing students had a positive perception towards nursing profession (6,12).

With regard to profession-related information, the present study showed that most respondents (77.5%) did not have any family members in the nursing field and that the majority (85.8%) were self-motivated to join the profession. This finding contradicts the study conducted by Wilson Ijayi Midawati, which reported that students were largely influenced by their families when choosing nursing as a career (6). Furthermore, the majority of respondents (91.7%) in the present study did not plan to change their profession in the future. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Patidar AB in 2011, which reported that 90% of graduating nursing students were not interested in changing their profession (13). However, despite their commitment to nursing, a large proportion of respondents (85.8%) expressed their intention to move abroad for employment opportunities. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Nasir MPO et al. in 2023, which found that most respondents strongly agreed that nursing provides opportunities to travel and work abroad.

Regarding positive perceptions, more than one-third of respondents (30.0%) strongly agreed that good salary and job security positively influence their perception of nursing. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Momin SKM et al. (14). In addition, about half of the respondents (50.8%) agreed that nursing is a caring profession in which ethical standards are maintained. This result supports the findings of Patidar (2011), where 70.0% of respondents perceived nursing as a caring profession with strong ethical standards (13). Moreover, more than two-thirds of respondents (70.8%) strongly agreed that nursing requires compassion, patience, and strength, highlighting the importance of these qualities in the profession. This finding is comparable with the study by Diksha Paudel et al. (2023), where 63.5% of respondents strongly agreed that nursing requires compassion, patience, and strength (10).

In terms of negative perceptions, slightly more than one-third of respondents (30.8%) strongly agreed that nursing is an extremely tough profession and does not receive adequate appreciation. This finding is consistent with the study conducted in Morang district by Diksha Paudel et al. (2023), where 34.9% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement (10). However, the study conducted by Nasir MPO et al. (2023) reported a higher proportion, where 64.4% of respondents strongly agreed that nursing is an extremely hard profession (11).

This study showed that perception of nursing students towards nursing profession is not associated with age, sex, marital status, address, academic year, region to join Nursing.

The main limitation of this study is that it was conducted in a single center, the Nepal Police Hospital School of Health Sciences, Maharajgunj, Kathmandu. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to nursing students in other settings or institutions. And response bias might have occurred due to self-administered questionnaire.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that slightly more than half of the respondents from Nepal Police Hospital School of Health Sciences reported positive views towards nursing profession. However, a considerable proportion of students also expressed negative perceptions, particularly regarding the profession being tough and lacking adequate appreciation. Additionally, the majority of respondents expressed a desire to move abroad for employment opportunities.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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