

Attitudes of Nursing Students at the University of Aden Towards the Nursing Profession

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Abstract

Introduction: Choosing to study nursing is affected by attitudes that carried by members of society towards it. The attitudes are a general, acquired, relative and emotional tendency that affects the specific motivations of the human being and plays a key role in guiding behavior towards achieving the goals and awareness of its results. The study aimed to identify the attitudes of the Faculty of Nursing students, University of Aden towards the nursing profession and the differences in these attitudes according to the personal variables.

Methods: This is a descriptive study with a universal sample of all three academic levels of nursing students who were targeted with a self-administered questionnaire prepared for this purpose in the period from 22/12/2019 until 20/01/2020. The questionnaire consists of 20 items. Attitude questions were weighted on Likert's five-point scale and attitude score was calculated as follows: negative attitude 1-2.49; moderately positive attitude 2.50 - 3.49, and highly positive attitude 3.50-5.

Results: Overall attitudes of the students towards the nursing profession was moderately positive, in terms of personal views towards the profession, the personality traits of the nurse, the future of the profession, and society's views of the profession. There was a statistically significant differences in attitudes depending on the gender variable, but a difference not found depending on the age group and years of study.

Conclusion: Faculty of Nursing must prepare awareness programs to familiarize students with the nursing profession and its importance, focusing on the image of good nursing practices in the first-year curriculum, developing a description for the graduate and linking the college with the community.

Keywords: Attitudes, Nursing Student, Nursing Profession, Nurse's Personality Traits, Yemen.

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اتجاهات طلبة كلية التمريض في جامعة عدن نحو مهنة التمريض

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ملخص الدراسة

المقدمة: إن اختيار دراسة التمريض يتأثر بالاتجاهات التي يحملها أفراد المجتمع نحوها. فالإتجاهات هي ميل عام، مكتسب، نسبي وعاطفي يؤثر على الدوافع المحددة للإنسان ويلعب دوراً رئيسياً في توجيه السلوك نحو تحقيق الأهداف وإدراك نتائجه. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على اتجاهات طلبة كلية التمريض بجامعة عدن تجاه مهنة التمريض والاختلاف في هذه المواقف حسب المتغيرات الشخصية.

المنهجية: هذه دراسة وصفية استهدفت جميع طلاب المستويات الثلاثة في كلية التمريض خلال الفترة من 2019/12/22 حتى 2020/01/20، وتم جمع البيانات باستخدام استبيان يعبأ ذاتياً معد مسبقاً لهذا الغرض. يتكون الاستبيان من 20 فقرة أعطيت وزناً وفقاً لمقياس ليكرت المكون من خمس نقاط، وتم الحكم على الإتجاهات وفقاً للدرجات التالية: إتجاه سلبي بدرجة متدنية 1 - 2.49، إتجاه إيجابي بدرجة متوسطة 2.50 - 3.49 و إتجاه إيجابي بدرجة عالية 3.50-5.

النتائج: تضمنت الدراسة 102 طالباً وطالبة. كانت الإتجاهات الكلية للطلاب تجاه مهنة التمريض إيجابية إلى حد ما، من حيث وجهات النظر الشخصية تجاه المهنة، والسمات الشخصية للمريض، ومستقبل المهنة، وكذلك آراء المجتمع في المهنة. كانت هنالك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في الإتجاهات اعتماداً على متغير الجنس، ولكن لا يوجد فرق اعتماداً على الفئة العمرية والسنوات الأكاديمية للطلاب.

الاستنتاج: أوصت الدراسة أن تقوم كلية التمريض بإعداد برامج توعوية لتعريف الطلاب بمهنة التمريض وأهميتها، مع التركيز على صورة ممارسات التمريض الجيدة في مناهج السنة الأولى، وتطوير وصف لخريج كلية التمريض، وربط الكلية بالمجتمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإتجاهات، طالب التمريض، مهنة التمريض، السمات الشخصية للمريض، اليمن.

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Introduction

Nursing is an essential component of the health service system in all the world, where nurses make up the largest proportion of the total health system workers, who possess the inherent power and influence in the quality of care services in health system [1]. Nursing is defined as the protection, promotion and achievement of the ideal state of health, effectiveness, and prevention from harm and disease, alleviate suffering by diagnosing and treating human responses, and support in providing care for individuals, families and communities [2].

There has been a major development in the nursing profession over the past 100 years, and the attitude of society towards it has remarkable and important changed [3]. However, there are still a number of factors that negatively affect them, where this profession has not received the required respect due to factors such as the bad reputation about nursing in the community, and the lack of a specific job description of its employees, and no curriculum or reference in nursing administrative matters, and no degrees to authorize the management of senior positions significant, in addition to sovereignty of doctors, and lack of independence of the nursing profession, as well as their low salaries [4].

The interest in studying the nursing profession is greatly influenced by the attitudes carried by community members towards this profession, the attitude plays a key role in guiding human behavior towards achieving goals and realizing their outcomes,

and effectively addressing complex information about the environment in which a person lives [5].

Negative attitudes among nursing students have prevailed in the past towards the nursing profession due to the stressful and abhorrent work of nursing in hospitals, working in holidays, lack of respect for work, and low salaries, so the loss of nurses' enjoyment of what they do, not only reduces the quality of work for patients and health-care seekers, but also contributes to demoralization, where the job burnout syndrome is consistent with the feelings of fatigue and frustration that come from the negative attitude towards their profession [1,6].

Low morale among nursing students leads to loss of motivation and drop out of study in this field, where the lack of understanding of the role of nursing was the main reason for the low level of morale among nursing students. Making the profession familiar to students and adjusting their negative attitude before entering this field has brought morale, especially males. Improving the functional performance which following the positive view and job satisfaction will improve the quality of patient care and increase productivity [7].

The importance of this study is identifying the reality of the attitudes of students of the Faculty of Nursing at University of Aden, which contributes to help all those involved in the planning of the nursing profession in the formulation of in-depth programs in this profession, as well as being the first study conducted in the field of attitudes towards the

nursing profession in Aden according to the researcher's knowledge.

The study aimed to identify the attitudes of the Faculty of Nursing students, University of Aden towards the nursing profession and the differences in these attitudes according to gender, age group and academic year.

Methods

Study design and setting

A descriptive study conducted at the Faculty of Nursing at University of Aden from 22/12/2019 until 20/01/2020.

Study sample

Because of small number of the study population [8], a universal sample of all students at the Nursing faculty was enrolled in the study. To assess the clarity and the possibility of applying the study tools to collect data, the questionnaire was pretested on 5% of the respondents who were later excluded.

Study tools

A self-administered questionnaire was developed by referring to previous studies [9,10]. The questionnaire consists of two parts:

- Personal information of students (gender, age and academic year) .
- Four fields with 20 items to measure the following fields:
- personal view of the profession 5 items, (2) the perception of personality traits of the nurse 5 items, (3) future of the profession 5 items and (4) the society's view towards the profession 5 items.

Each questionnaire statement was given a weight according to Likert's five-point scale to estimate the

significance of the statement as follows: 5: Strongly Agree, 4: Agree, 3: Neutral, 2: Disagree, 1: Strongly Disagree).

Data analysis

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were made. For interpretation of the arithmetic means, the degree of presence of the attitude was judged according to the following scale [10]:

- Negative attitude: 1-2.49.
- Moderately positive attitude: 2.50-3.49.
- Highly positive attitude 3.50-5.

Mean, standard deviation (SD), t-test and ANOVA were used to test association between the level of attitudes of participants. A cut-off *p*-value of 0.05 was considered as statistically significant.

Ethical consideration

Ethical approval was issued by the Research and Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Aden. Agreement to conduct the study was approved by the deanship of the Faculty of Nursing at University of Aden. The interview was conducted after obtaining a verbal informed consent from each participant. Every student has been assured for the confidentiality of the information and the utilization of the study purpose. It is worth noting that the researcher has no conflict of interest.

Results

The total number of students was 102. The majority of students (80.4%) was males. They were distributed equally

over the age groups 19-21 and 22-24 (47.1% each). The highest percentage was formed by the second year (38.2%), followed by the third year (32.4%) and finally, the first academic year (29.4%), Table 1.

Table (1): Nursing Students' Characteristics (n=102)

Characteristic		No.	%
Gender	Male	82	80.4
	Female	20	19.6
Age (Years)	19-21	48	47.1
	22-24	48	47.1
	25-27	6	5.8
Academic Year	First	30	29.4
	Second	39	38.2
	Third	33	32.4

In Table 2, attitude of students was negative for the statements: nursing profession is a humanitarian

profession and honorable profession, it is an arduous profession, and the nature of the nurse's work time it is uncomfortable. Moderate positive attitude was found for the sentiment "If I were to choose another profession, I would only choose nursing". On the other hand, students expressed high positive attitude for nursing profession being not differs from the profession of servant and that there is no importance of the services provided by the nurse. The overall mean of the field was (2.64) reflecting a moderate positive attitude.

Table 2: Nursing Students' Attitudes towards the View of the Profession

Attitudes related to personal view of the profession	Attitude score		Attitude
	Mean	SD	
Nursing profession is a humanitarian profession.	1.2	0.73	Negative
Nursing profession is an honorable profession.	1.5	0.90	Negative
The nursing profession is an arduous profession	2.2	1.18	Negative
I see the nature-work time of nurse is uncomfortable.	2.4	1.23	Negative
If I were to choose another profession, I would only choose nursing.	3.0	1.24	Moderate positive
I see that the nursing profession is no different from the servant.	3.7	1.40	High positive
The services provided by the nurse are not important.	4.4	1.02	High positive
The final Result	2.6	1.10	Moderate positive

Table 3 indicates that the students' attitude was negative towards need of the nursing profession for courage and strong heart, the nursing profession requires a person who accepts to obey the orders of others and that the nurse's work does not interfere with motherhood. Moderate positive attitude was given to: the nursing profession requires to work under enormous pressure, rarely patients

respect the nurses these days and that those who choose the nursing profession usually suffer from an inferiority. High positive attitude was devoted to the statement indicates that nursing studying should be restricted to females only. The overall arithmetic mean of the field was 2.6, reflecting a moderately positive trend.

Table 3: Nursing Students' Attitudes Towards the Nurse's Personality Traits

Attitudes regarding view to the nurse's personality traits	Attitude score		Attitude
	Mean	SD	
The nursing profession needs courage and a strong heart.	1.8	1.09	Negative
I believe that the nursing profession requires a person who accepts to obey the orders of others.	2.1	0.98	Negative
The nurse's work does not interfere with her role as a mother.	2.3	1.05	Negative
I believe that the nursing profession requires from the nurse to work under enormous work pressures permanently.	2.5	1.16	Moderate positive
Rarely, patients respect the nurses these days.	2.6	1.36	Moderate positive
Those who choose the nursing profession usually suffer from an inferiority.	3.3	1.45	Moderate positive
The nursing studying should be restricted to females only.	3.6	1.43	High positive
The final Result	2.6	1.22	Moderate positive

Table 4 demonstrates negative attitude regarding feeling a pain that the nurse promotion system is still lagging behind the rest of the professions, nursing career has good professional and practical future, the future of the nursing profession is not less than the future of other professions, and the acceptance to study nursing is due to the availability of employment opportunities. On the

other hand, their attitude was moderately positive towards: choosing nursing mostly because of no other opportunities to learn, the future of the nurse is not greatly influenced by the extent of effort performed in the profession and that there is no hope of advancing the nursing profession. Moderate positive attitude was the overall characteristic of this field (2.6).

Table 4: Nursing Students Attitudes Towards the Future of the Profession

Attitudes regarding the future of the profession	Attitude score		Attitude
	Mean	SD	
I feel a pain that the nurse promotion system is still lagging behind the rest of the professions	1.9	1.05	Negative
Nursing is a career with a good professional and practical future.	2.1	1.16	Negative
The future of the nursing profession is no less than the future of other professions.	2.2	1.28	Negative
I believe that my acceptance to study nursing is due to the availability of employment opportunities.	2.4	1.09	Negative
I see that most are in the nursing profession chose nursing because they had no other opportunities to learn.	2.9	1.46	Moderate positive
The future of the nurse is not greatly influenced by the extent of effort he/she makes in the profession.	3.3	1.32	Moderate positive
No hope of advancing the nursing profession.	3.7	1.27	Moderate positive
The Final Result	2.6	1.23	Moderate positive

Table 5 displays moderate positive attitude in 4 of the 6 items related the society view of the profession: I don't

mind my brother or sister joining the nursing profession; If I had the opportunity, I would have directed

one of my relatives to study nursing; I think our community looks at the nurse with respect and appreciation and that the profession contradicts with the customs and traditions of the Arab society whereas negative attitude was noticed for 2 statements: “would prefer if the Arab nurse

received recognition and good treatment from individuals as well as the foreign nurse” and “there is no objection to marrying to workers in the nursing profession”. In sum, the overall attitude of the field was moderately positive (2.8).

Table 5: Nursing Students’ Attitude Towards the Society's View of the Profession

Attitudes related to the society's view of the profession	Attitude score		Attitude
	Mean	SD	
Would prefer if the Arab nurse received recognition and good treatment from individuals as well as the foreign nurse.	1.5	1.04	Negative
There is no objection to marrying to workers in the nursing profession.	2.3	1.33	Negative
I don't mind my brother or sister joining the nursing profession.	2.6	1.40	Moderate positive
If I had the opportunity, I would have directed one of my relatives to study nursing.	2.7	1.37	Moderate positive
I think our community looks at the nurse with respect and appreciation.	3.1	1.30	Moderate positive
I believe that the nursing profession is contradict to the customs and traditions of Arab society.	3.2	1.47	Moderate positive
The Final Result	2.8	1.30	Moderate positive

Table 6 shows that there is statistically significant difference between the means of overall responses of the respondents according to the gender variable

($p=0.044$). However, there were no statistically significant differences between these means according to the age and academic year.

Table 6: Overall Attitude by Demographic Variables

Variables	Attitude score		Test of significance	
	Mean	SD	Statistics	p
Gender	Male	2.7	4.145	0.044*
	Female	2.5		
Age group	19-21	2.7	0.865	0.424
	22-24	2.6		
	25-27	2.6		
Academic level	First	2.8	2.422	0.094
	Second	2.6		
	Third	2.6		

*Statistically significant

Discussion

The current study showed that the overall attitude of students towards the nursing profession was moderately positive. This is consistent with Kathreena *et al* study (2015) in Mongolia which showed moderately positive attitude of nursing college students towards the nursing profession [7]. However, the current finding is in disagreement with the study of Al Thaqafi (2006) at the University of Naif, Saudi Arabia, which pointed to a negative attitude towards the nursing profession among students of Al- Seebai Health Institute who were coming from northern Saudi Arabia [11]. This may be due to the nature of social and culture factors of the region from which students came and who see the female nurse's work in a mixed place with males, as well as her work at night outside the home, contradict with culture and social factors and customs. In contrast, we argue that such values which prevent females from mixing with males at work or working night shifts has weak influence in Aden and an evidence of that is the presence of nurses significantly in the hospitals of Aden and most of Yemen's hospitals are side by side with the male nurses, as well as having night shifts in those hospitals.

The results of the current study showed that the students' attitude was moderately positive with regard to the personal view of the profession, especially that they would have chosen them if they were allowed to choose another profession. The choice of nursing personnel as a profession is inconsistent with Al-Thaqafi in 2006 [11] and Al-Omar

in Saudi Arabia in 2004 [12], which showed that the dimension of the attitude towards choosing nursing as a profession was very low among students. This may be due to the socio-economic differences between the two countries [8].

In the same context, the results of the present study showed that the personal view of nursing students was high positive towards the nursing profession as having no different from the servant, and that no importance of the services which provided by nursing, due to the nature of the nursing profession in which the nurse is committed to providing all the needs of patients' health. The current role played by the nurse without a job description limiting his/her role to give the drug as directed by the doctor or the preparation of the patient for various medical and diagnostic procedures, and these services from the routine of patient care, compared with the services of doctors or other therapists seem to be a low esteem in the view of nursing students. This finding is consistent with Ashalata (2013) study in Nepal who found that about 75.9% of nursing students at the University of Kathmandu believe that nurses follow the doctor's orders without any question, 55.7% thought that nurses are unable to make a decision on their own, 97 % saw that the nursing role does not exceed giving injections and meeting the needs of patient [13].

The current study showed that students' attitudes were moderately positive with regard to the nurse's personality traits. Their highest

response was that nursing should be limited to females only, and those who choose nursing are usually sympathy. The courage and strength of the heart in nursing is a simple personal characteristic even if the tasks and roles that they play and the dangerous situations they face in their work, and that the positive attitude towards nursing is limited to females may be due to the past of nursing that was limited to female only and this also promoted by the media, as were former nursing schools were only for females. In addition, the female emotional and innate tendencies to build social relations with others due to its physiological composition characterized by some psychological and personal traits distinguish them from males contribute to the orientation towards the acceptability of the nursing profession exclusively for females [7]. The misunderstanding of nursing students can be due to a number of reasons, such as a way of doctors dealing with nurses, the system of promotion in the profession lagging behind other professions, in addition to the general view of the nursing profession compared to other health professions such as medicine despite the importance of the nursing profession. Al-Thaqafi further illustrated that the highest percentage of students viewed that those who chose the nursing profession were usually feeling inferior, and that some doctors' dealing with nurses also generated a sense of inferiority [11].

This study showed that the students' attitudes towards the future of the nursing profession were moderately positive. This total attitude is consistent with the study of Abu Marq and Makhamra (2007) where students' attitude was moderately positive towards the future of the

nursing profession [9]. This may be due to the reality of the graduates and students of the Faculty of Nursing in terms of their strong entry into the labor market with the information and skill that earned them popularity and excellence, especially in private hospitals and community campaigns of vaccination and health education. This is in contrast with what was reported by Al-Omar (2004) who shows that the highest percentage of students do not know that the nursing profession offers them opportunities to travel and work abroad, nor can they find employment in the nursing profession wherever they go [12].

The current study revealed that the students' attitude was moderately positive with regard to the society's view of the profession, especially in their view that the nursing profession conflicts with the customs and traditions of the Arab community.

The present result is consistent with the study Abu Marq and Al-Makhamra (2007) in which students showed a moderately positive attitude towards the society's view of the nursing profession, also this result is consistent with Poreddi *et al.* (2012) in India which stated that 48.8% of the students of the Faculty of Nursing at Bangalore University believe that social prejudice against the nursing profession has a profound impact on their choice for it as a future profession, and 33.3% of them chose to study at the Faculty of Nursing although it is not their preferred choice in order to improve their economic situation [14]. This finding is not consistent with the study Al-Batsh *et al.* (1997) at the University of Jordan that the students of the Faculty of Nursing still have some kind of negative attitude

towards this profession in terms of directing a relative to study it and marrying its employees [15].

The present results showed a significant difference between the attitudes of students towards the nursing profession according to gender. This could explain many of the findings as the majority of Nursing Faculty students is mostly males (80.4%) and they are from rural areas where the nurse has a prominent position in the health sector because of the small number of doctors and their performance of many important health services to patients and thus their positive view for themselves and also the positive view of society for them, which is in agreement with the study of Al-Batsh *et al.* (1997) in which male students' attitudes towards the nursing profession were more positive than females [13].

However, the present study showed that there were no significant differences between the attitudes of students towards the nursing profession according to age and academic level. The existence of no differences between the age and academic level of respondents of this study in their attitudes towards the nursing profession may be due to the similar information gained by the students during the years of study, as well as the practical aspect of the courses, the students gain more knowledge of the reality of the nursing profession and the role played by the nurse in the hospital in particular, and this may enter many students into the profession of nursing in hospitals during their study, which makes them first-hand knowledge of the reality of their profession, which affects their attitudes towards it. This finding is consistent with the Kaur

et al. study (2016) in three Indian universities which indicated no difference in the direction of nursing students towards the nursing profession according to age groups and the academic year where all students achieved the similar values on the trend scale [16].

Conclusion

The study found that the overall attitudes of the students towards the nursing profession was moderately positive, in terms of personal views towards the profession, the personality traits of the nurse, the future of the profession, and society's views of the profession. There was a statistically significant difference in attitudes depending on gender, but not age group or academic level of students. Therefore, Faculty of Nursing must prepare awareness programs to familiarize students with the nursing profession and its importance, focusing on the image of good nursing practices in the first-year curriculum, developing a description for the graduate and linking the college with the community.

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