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## Nursing Students' Attitudes toward Nursing Profession and its Relation to Study Adjustment

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**Abstract: Background:** Similar to all professions, there are positive and negative aspects to consider regarding a career in nursing. Although the profession is challenging, it also provides opportunities for unique intrinsic rewards that make the career worth the effort. **Aim:** to measure the attitudes of Faculty of Nursing students toward nursing profession and its' relation to study adjustment. **Subjects and Methods:** A descriptive correlation study was used. **Setting:** The present study was conducted at four Faculties of Nursing, four universities (Assiut, Sohag, South Valley, and Aswan). **Subjects:** A convenience sample of 1252 students at the academic year (2017-2018) was recruited. **Tools:** one tool used which included personal characteristics, "Study adjustment scale" and Student attitudes towards nursing profession scale. **Results:** the study revealed that (92.9%) of the studied students had positive attitudes towards nursing profession and (70.2%) of them had a high level of study adjustment, also there is a statistically significant correlation between all dimensions of the study adjustment scale and all dimensions of the attitude scale. **Conclusion:** There was a significant correlation between attitude toward and study adjustment among nursing students. **Recommendations:** The study recommends.

**Key words:** Nursing students, Attitudes, Nursing profession, Study adjustment

### INTRODUCTION

Nursing enclose autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, well or sick and in all settings. (Kanika & Kumar, 2016). Nursing is a noble profession. Nurses when compared to other health care workers, have greater opportunities for unique and productive interaction with children, families and people around her. If the student nurses are well adjusted and emotionally stable, the quality of care provided to the patients will improve. Patients will feel satisfied which in turn will give more job satisfaction to the nurse. This will help in improving the standards of profession (Reghuram & Mathias, 2014).

Nowadays, the image of nursing in Arab countries is changing to the best, and it is now considered one of the treasured and recommended professions. Admission to nursing faculties in Arabian countries became a competition determined by high academic grades. It may appear that the image of nursing as a profession in the Egyptian community was not improved significantly even after the nurse was university qualified (Abd El-Halem, et al 2011). In addition, nursing is an unacceptable profession and is a last option for Bahraini students. Families in Bahrain perceive nursing as an inappropriate profession for girls, low paying, low status, and involving much hard and unpleasant work (Tawash, et al., 2012).

Shortage of nursing personnel has been a fact from the 70's to 90's century. This shortage was increased until reach a critical and difficult stage when compared to other jobs or carriers. (Attree et al, 2011). Therefore, there is an intense need to hire more nursing personnel in the different health care organizations and utilize different strategies to keep them in the field of nursing. This is the main challenge nowadays in health care organizational all over the world (ANA, 2013).

A key challenge facing health policy makers in Egypt today is the shortage of nurses (particularly qualified nurses); which is estimated about 30000 nurses the shortage has implications on both the quality of health care and the efficiency of the production of health services. Egypt's nurse to population ratio of 1.33 - 2.67 nurses per 1000 population compares to 6.17 in Qatar and 3.3 in Jordan. There is no "right" nurse to population ratio since nurses represent one of the inputs used with other resources to produce health services. However, obviously a serious shortage in qualified nurses would most likely have serious implications on the quality of care (Abdo & Mohammed, 2015).

The reasons for the perceived lack of interest in nursing as a career are multi-factorial, and may differ from context to context. In South Africa, the low status of the profession, heavy workloads, and poor access to personal development programs have been proposed as some of the reasons

learners are not attracted to nursing as a career. Other negative perceptions about nursing include that the workload is physically demanding, and that the shortage of nurses increases the stress of the work (Miligi & Selim, 2014)

The public knowledge base about the nursing profession is very limited and not well understood. Similarly, students enter nursing education with a limited notion of the profession of nursing. They decide to enter into a nursing career based on perceptions from stereotyped and idealized images. Sometimes this preconceived idea of nursing is not realistic. The reality of practice may alter the nursing student's perception of the profession during his or her course of study or it may change after graduation, when the student assumes the role of the registered nurse (Donelan et al., 2008).

Attitude plays a principal role in guiding human behavior toward achieving goals, awareness of its consequences and effective processing of complex information about living environment. The attitudes of nurses toward their work, profession, organization, and administration will predict the behaviors that they will show in these fields. The administrators of nursing services can contribute to both the nursing service and the development of its staff by evaluating their attitudes and taking actions according to the results (Poreddi, et al, 2012).

Adjustment is a continuous process, not fixed or static state, in fact adjustment is defined as the continuous process of satisfying one's desires, and it involves many aspect of behavior. Abraham Maslow evaluated the well-adjusted person in terms of self-actualization, clearly stressing the adjustment process. Human beings constantly seek expression of the potential. Those developing and utilizing their capacities to the fullest are said to be self-actualization. Nursing student adjustment is defined as students' willingness to actively participate in the clinical learning process, exhibiting tangible behaviors in the class or clinical environment or outside the class (D'Souza et al., 2014).

Nursing students are in the developmental phase of adolescence or young adulthood they are in a crisis state where they have to face significant changes in their living circumstances. Entering world of nursing presents students with an array of changes. The students nurse is entering a vocation where still in their teens, they are asked to change both from adolescent to adult and from layperson to a professional. So it is necessary that she is well prepared and should have good adjustment among themselves and to the environment (Hiremathand Wale, 2017)

The perception of nursing students regarding nursing as a profession varies. Some consider nursing as a caring profession. Others perceive nursing as a profession that helps people to gain better health. Further, there are additional views, such as: seeing nursing as a noble and respected career (Mackintosh, 2006). However, further opinion; nursing is still viewed as a 'medical-technical' activity as reported by Tawash, et al, in 2012. Moreover, a recent study about "Associate nursing students' perceptions toward the nursing profession in Jordan" showed that the associate nursing students generally have a significantly

positive perception about the image of the nursing profession and the majority of them feel proud when talking with others about a nursing career (Al Jarrah, 2013). These variations regarding perceptions among nursing students and community views, pose a great question regarding the reasons and the factors of these differences in points of views.

#### *Aim of the study:*

This study aimed to study the attitudes of nursing students toward nursing profession and identify its relation to study adjustment.

#### *Research questions:*

1. What is the attitude of students at Faculty of Nursing towards nursing profession?
2. Is there a relation between students' attitude toward nursing profession and their study adjustment?
3. Is there a relation between students' study adjustment and gender?
4. Is there a relation between students' study adjustment and academic level?

## SUBJECTS AND METHODS

#### *Study design:*

A descriptive correlational study was used.

#### *Setting:*

This study was conducted at four Faculties of Nursing in Upper Egypt (Assiut University, Sohag University, South Valley University and Aswan University).

#### *Subjects:*

All convenient students enrolled in the first and final grades in the previous mentioned setting were included in this study. Their total number was 1252 students, (644 students from first year was, and 608 students from final year) after receiving their consents for participation in this study with the following inclusion criteria: both sexes and student age (18-24 years).No exclusion criteria

#### *Study tools:*

There were two tools used in the present study:

**Tool I: A structured questionnaire** for collecting data was used in this study. It was developed by the researcher after reviewing the related literature and divided into three parts:

**Part (1): personal characteristics:** It included age, sex, academic level, residence, mother & father education, mother & father occupation and if had relatives in nursing career.

**Part (2): "Study adjustment scale"** to assess students' adjustment of their study that was developed by (Youngman 1979) and translated into Arabic version by (Housien Aldoreny, 1985). The scale consists of 26 statements and includes three dimensions (Compliance dimension, Studiousness dimension, and Teacher contact dimension). All items have a dichotomous response format (Yes/ No). A quantitative estimate of study adjustment provided by the total appropriate yes/no responses. The score of the items was summed –up and converted into

percent score. The study adjustment was considered high if the total percent score was equal to 70% or more and considered low if less than 70%.

**Tool (2): Student attitudes towards nursing profession scale** developed by Ipek Coban and Kasikci in (2011) and comprised of 55 items, it divided into five domains. First domain of the scale related to Cognitive and cultural dimension (8 statements), the second domain related to the conviction and satisfaction dimension (12 statements), the third domain related to profession (13 statements), the fourth domain related to social (15 statements), and the fifth domain related to economic (7 statements). The scoring system of this part was five point Likert scale ranged from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Some items were phrased in a negative direction. For positive items, score of 5 was given for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for undecided, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. Scores for the negative items of the scale were assigned in the opposite direction. The students' attitude towards nursing profession was considered positive if the total percent score was equal to 70% or more and considered negative if less than 70%. Five experts in the field of education and nursing measured the validity for face and content validity and it was 0.82.

**Pilot study:** The pilot study also served to test the feasibility, clarity and practicability of the data collection tool. In addition, the pilot helped the researchers to estimate the time needed to collect the data. It was carried out on 10% from the total number of the students. The pilot study sample was excluded from the total sample. The reliability of the study tools was measured for internal consistency using Cronbach

alpha coefficient method  $\alpha = 0.920$  which indicated high degree of reliability.

**Ethical considerations:** All the relevant principles of ethics in research were followed. The pertinent authority approved the study protocol. Students' consent to participate was obtained after informing them about their rights to participate, refuse, or withdraw at any time. Total confidentiality of any obtained information was ensured. The study questionnaire doesn't entail any harmful effects on students.

#### **Fieldwork:**

An official permission was obtained from the Dean of each Faculty of Nursing, from the previous mentioned Universities before embarking on the study. After finalizing the study tools, the actual data collection and data analysis during the second term of the academic year 2017/2018. The students who agreed to participate in the study filled the questionnaire. According to their academic schedule, the students were given time -at the end of a nursing lecture- to fill the questionnaire after explaining the purpose of the study. Clarifications were done when needed. The time was taken to fill the sheet was about 25-30 minutes.

#### **Statistical analysis:**

Data entry and statistical analysis were done using SPSS 22.0 statistical software package. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, mean, standard deviation. Statistical significance was considered at  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ .

## **RESULTS**

**Table (1): Distribution of Personal Characteristics of the studied students (n= 1252)**

Characters	No.	%	
<b>Governorate:</b>			
Assiut	419	33.5	
Sohag	307	24.5	
South Valley	251	20.0	
Aswan	275	22.0	
<b>Gender:</b>			
Male	498	39.8	
Female	754	60.2	
<b>Age: (years)</b>			
18 – 19	492	39.3	
20 – 21	289	23.1	
22 – 24	471	37.6	
Mean $\pm$ SD (Range)	20.62 $\pm$ 1.86 (18.0 – 24.0)		
<b>Class:</b>			
First	644	51.4	
Fourth	608	48.6	
<b>Residence:</b>			
Rural	830	66.3	
Urban	422	33.7	
<b>Father education:</b>			
	Illiterate	235	18.8
	Primary	112	8.9
	Preparatory	65	5.2
	Secondary	461	36.8
	University	379	30.3
<b>Mother education:</b>			
	Illiterate	235	18.8
	Primary	140	11.2

Preparatory	101	8.1
Secondary	520	41.5
University	256	20.4
<b>Father job:</b>		
Professional	397	31.7
Employee	227	18.1
Free business	155	12.4
Skilled worker	121	9.7
Farmer	128	10.2
Retired	63	5.0
Unskilled worker	95	7.6
Dead	66	5.3
<b>Mother job:</b>		
Working	249	19.9
Not working	993	79.3
Dead	10	0.8
<b>Having relatives in nursing field:</b>		
Yes	592	47.3
No	660	52.7

The nursing students' personal data presented in **table (1)**. It was found that about two-thirds (60.2%) of studied nursing students were females with mean age  $20.62 \pm 1.86$  and

(66.3%) were came from rural area. The majority (81.2 %) of the students' parents were educated and near half of them (47.3%) having relatives in the nursing field.

**Table (2): Total score of attitude scale and the study adjustment scale among studied nursing students**

Items	No. (n= 1252)	%
<b>Study adjustment:</b>		
Low	373	29.8
High	879	70.2
<b>Attitude:</b>		
Negative	89	7.1
Positive	1163	92.9

The total score level of attitude scale and the study adjustment scale among the studied nursing students displayed in **Table (2)**. According to the response of the students to attitude scale score, it was noticed that, the most

of them (92.9%) had positive attitude to nursing profession. Add to that, 70.2 % of the studied nursing students had a high level of study adjustment.

**Table (3): Correlation between dimensions of attitude scale and study adjustment scale dimensions.**

Attitude scale dimensions		Study adjustment dimensions			
		Compliance	Studiosness	Teacher contact	Total score
Knowledge & culture	r-value	0.280	0.400	0.270	0.433
	P-value	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>
Conviction & satisfaction	r-value	0.223	0.366	0.259	0.381
	P-value	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>
Professional	r-value	0.221	0.342	0.253	0.367
	P-value	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>
Social	r-value	0.234	0.319	0.265	0.361
	P-value	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>
Economic	r-value	0.061	0.157	0.186	0.174
	P-value	<b>0.032*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>
Total score	r-value	0.264	0.398	0.300	0.431
	P-value	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>	<b>0.000*</b>

**Table (3):** shows Correlation between dimensions of attitude scale and study adjustment scale dimensions. It was found that there is a highly statistically significant correlation between all dimensions of the study adjustment

scale and all dimensions of the attitude scale. The attitude scale score increase, the study adjustment score increase, with highly statistically significant difference ( $P=0.000 / r=0.431$ ).

Table (4):

	Attitude level				P-value	Study adjustment				P-value
	Negative		Positive			Low		High		
	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	
<b>Age: (years)</b>										
18 – 19	29	5.9	463	94.1	0.130	104	21.1	388	78.9	<0.001*
20 – 21	28	9.7	261	90.3		97	33.6	192	66.4	
22 – 24	32	6.8	439	93.2		172	36.5	299	63.5	
<b>Sex:</b>										
Male	49	9.8	449	90.2	0.002*	178	35.7	320	64.3	<0.001*
Female	40	5.3	714	94.7		195	25.9	559	74.1	
<b>Class:</b>										
First	43	6.7	601	93.3	0.541	154	23.9	490	76.1	<0.001*
Fourth	46	7.6	562	92.4		219	36.0	389	64.0	
<b>Residence:</b>										
Rural	63	7.6	767	92.4	0.352	236	28.4	594	71.6	0.140
Urban	26	6.2	396	93.8		137	32.5	285	67.5	
<b>Father education:</b>										
Illiterate	15	6.4	220	93.6	0.638	68	28.9	167	71.1	0.657
Read & write	12	10.7	100	89.3		36	32.1	76	67.9	
Basic	4	6.2	61	93.8		16	24.6	49	75.4	
Secondary	32	6.9	429	93.1		146	31.7	315	68.3	
University	26	6.9	353	93.1		107	28.2	272	71.8	
<b>Mother education:</b>										
Illiterate	15	6.4	220	93.6	0.239	69	29.4	166	70.6	0.723
Read & write	16	11.4	124	88.6		49	35.0	91	65.0	
Basic	5	5.0	96	95.0		29	28.7	72	71.3	
Secondary	33	6.3	487	93.7		152	29.2	368	70.8	
University	20	7.8	236	92.2		74	28.9	182	71.1	
<b>Father job:</b>										
Professional	28	7.1	369	92.9	0.958	117	29.5	280	70.5	0.730
Employee	14	6.2	213	93.8		65	28.6	162	71.4	
Free business	11	7.1	144	92.9		48	31.0	107	69.0	
Skilled worker	11	9.1	110	90.9		30	24.8	91	75.2	
Farmer	11	8.6	117	91.4		45	35.2	83	64.8	
Retired	5	7.9	58	92.1		20	31.7	43	68.3	
Unskilled worker	6	6.3	89	93.7		29	30.5	66	69.5	
<b>Mother job:</b>										
Working	17	6.8	232	93.2	0.817	76	30.5	173	69.5	0.826
Not working	72	7.3	921	92.7		296	29.8	697	70.2	
<b>Siblings:</b>										
Yes	39	6.6	553	93.4	0.497	164	27.7	428	72.3	0.126
No	50	7.6	610	92.4		209	31.7	451	68.3	

**Table (4)** presented the relation between mean scores of attitude scale and study adjustment scale among studied students and their personal characteristics. It was noticed that, the only a statistically significant associations between mean scores of attitude scale and the students' personal characteristics was related to gender (0.002). This revealed that female nursing students had more positive attitude than males. Regarding study adjustment, it is clear from the same table that, the mean score of study adjustment scale among female students was high compared to male students ( $P < 0.001$ ): In addition, there are statistically significant

relations between the students' study adjustment and their age and academic level ( $P < 0.001$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The image of both nurses and nursing as a profession is vital in the successful recruitment and retention of staff in the healthcare industry. Although nursing students' perception of nursing and factors influencing it were well investigated in the West, this was less examined in the Arab Islamic region. The present study displayed that 92.9% of the studied students had positive attitudes towards nursing

profession. This is goes with the findings of the study conducted in KSA by **Hiremathand Wale, (2017)** which found that that a large majority of the participants showed high level of knowledge on nursing profession. Similarly, with a previous study done by **Koushali et al., (2012)** who revealed that 94.3% of the participants their caring experience with a nurse was good.

Concerning study adjustment, the present study showed that the majority (70.2%) of the studied nursing students had a high level of study adjustment in all faculties. This is may be due to the majority of students are highly motivated, need to build good relationship with their teaching staff and focused to finish their study with high scores. This finding agreed with the finding of the study conducted by **Saleh, et al., (2015)** which declared that there are a significant correlation between cognitive motivation and Student adjustment. It contributes to national development by developing professional course contents to reflect national requirements. This is necessary, as studies available have been on cognitive and effective learning outcomes of students in medicine, nursing and education.

The current study showed that there is a highly statistically significant correlation between all dimensions of the study adjustment and all dimensions of the attitude toward nursing as a profession in all the Faculties of Nursing. This is may be due to that the majority of students having high scores in the secondary school and attached to the Faculties of Nursing in the four governorates with their desire, and this attitude about nursing is positive and like nursing as a profession and seeing it as a caring and important profession the same as any health profession. The same results were found in a study carried out by (**Ugwu, et al., 2010**) which revealed that there are a significant correlation between nursing students attitudes and their study adjustment. This goes in the same line with the study done by **Miligi and Selim(2014)** which stated that with more positive attitude towards the profession, the more likely the student will be attracted to nursing and choose to become a nurse.

The results of the current study revealed that female nursing students had more positive attitude than males. This is due the prevailing concept that nursing is a woman like profession. Nursing is a profession established by females that support the standard feminine image with characteristics of supporting, and caring, in contrast to man qualities of power, aggression, and authority. Males have concerns related to stereotyping and role strains, particularly in relation to patient care, as patients expecting female nurses to care for them, which cause difficulty in adjustment for men in nursing profession. Findings of study conducted by **El-Damen and Ahmed (2013)** disclosed that both the male and female students in all the academic years and colleges had a positive attitude toward the nursing profession.

Furthermore, the mean score of study adjustment scale among female students was high compared to male students ( $P < 0.001$ ). An explanation for this difference between comes from the results of the current study, which evidenced that positive attitude among female nursing students might enhancement their study adjustment. The finding is congruent with the findings of study conducted by

**Ismail et al., (2013)** which found that the male and female students show significant differences in academic adjustment. This indicates that female students have high academic adjustment.

Concerning the relationship between student's academic year and their study adjustment, the current study found that the mean study Adjustment is a statistically significant high among the first students' academic level. This can be attributed to that new nursing students' willingness to participate actively in the clinical learning process, exhibiting tangible behaviors in the class or clinical environment or outside the class. In addition, unsatisfying clinical placements may be another reason for fourth academic year students' withdrawing. Moreover, **D'Souza et al., 2014** declared that the new students respond to the demands by studying harder, change their study habits and rearrange their priorities. On the other side, **Saleh, et al., (2015)** reported that no significant relationship was seen between academic year and Nursing image or student adjustment.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nursing students at four studied faculties have a positive attitude toward nursing as a profession and they have high adjustment. Female students showed slightly better image than male. However, the positive attitude was not transmitted into a desire to join Nursing. There was a significant difference in attitude among male and female students.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Faculty management has to provide a good infrastructure and institution facilities to the student and teachers.
- Further study is needed on the perception of the nursing students about nursing as a profession how it affects student's adjustment in the other Egyptian Faculties of Nursing.
- Increase the nursing students' motivation through increase physical and moral incentives.
- The need to know the personal characteristics of students applying for study in nursing faculties

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