

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROFESSION
CHOICE OF MALE STUDENT NURSES AND PROFESSIONAL SELF-CONCEPTS**

**ERKEK ÖĞRENCİ HEMŞİRELERİN MESLEK SEÇİMİNİ ETKİLEYEN FAKTÖRLER İLE
PROFESYONEL BENLİK KAVRAMLARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ**

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ABSTRACT

The professional self-concept of the students affects the choice of profession, the image of the profession, the perception of the profession, the professional satisfaction and exhaustion level. Raising of student nurses having strong self-concepts will ensure presenting qualified patient care by positively affecting their patients and their profession. The aim of this study is to determine effect of the factors affecting the choice of profession in male students of nursing department on the concept of professional self-concept. The study was descriptive and correlational in design. The study's data were obtained from 107 male students in nursing department. The research data were collected using the profession choice scale in nursing and the professional self-concept in nursing students scale. In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics, pearson correlation analysis and regression analysis were used. It has been determined that the students who participated in the research have been affected by the factors affecting the profession choice more than the average value. Students think that professional self-concepts have improved in the positive direction over the average value. Correlation analysis results have showed that there is a positive, significant, and weak relationship between factors affecting profession choice and professional self-concepts of male students. It has been revealed that factors affecting profession choice in male student nurses are predictive of professional self-concepts. It was determined that the factors affecting profession choice of male student nurses affect their professional self-concept levels.

Key Words: Male student nurse, Profession choice, Professional self-concept.

ÖZ

Öğrencilerin profesyonel benlik kavramı, meslek seçimini, meslek imajını, mesleğin algılanmasını, mesleki memnuniyetini ve tükenme düzeyini etkilemektedir. Profesyonel benlik kavramı güçlü olan öğrenci hemşirelerin yetişmesi hastalarını ve mesleklerini olumlu yönde etkileyerek nitelikli hasta bakımı sunmalarını sağlayacaktır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, hemşirelik bölümü erkek öğrencilerinde meslek seçimini etkileyen faktörlerin profesyonel benlik kavramına etkisini belirlemektir. Bu çalışma tanımlayıcı ve korelasyonel olarak dizayn edilmiştir. Çalışmanın uygulaması bir üniversitenin sağlık yüksekokulunda eğitim gören 107 hemşirelik bölümü erkek öğrencisi ile yapılmıştır. Veriler hemşirelikte meslek seçimi ölçeği, öğrenci hemşirelerde profesyonel benlik kavramı ölçeği kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde ortalama ve standart sapma değerleri, pearson korelasyon ve regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin meslek seçimini etkileyen faktörlerden ortalama değer üzerinde etkilendikleri belirlenmiştir. Öğrenciler ortalama değer üzerinde profesyonel benlik kavramlarının

olumlu yönde geliştiğini düşünmektedirler. Korelasyon analizi sonuçları erkek öğrencilerin meslek seçimini etkileyen faktörler ile profesyonel benlik kavramları arasında olumlu, anlamlı ve zayıf bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Erkek öğrenci hemşirelerde meslek seçimini etkileyen faktörlerin profesyonel benlik kavramlarının yordayıcısı olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Erkek öğrenci hemşirelerin meslek seçimini etkileyen faktörlerin profesyonel benlik düzeylerini etkilediği belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erkek öğrenci hemşire, Meslek seçimi, Profesyonel benlik

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, nursing profession is among the professions that offer a wide range of roles and a comprehensive responsibility area. Nurses use their expertise, experience and skills to initiate health-care measures, and to improve and promote health and well-being of individuals. For this reason, nursing, which has been discussed whether it is a profession or not in the past, is regarded as an area of profession today. Profession is defined as "a defined work that is based on the systematic knowledge and skills gained with a certain education, to produce beneficial goods and provide services for people, and to make money on their behalf". As it is seen in this definition, individuals should make their choices by being aware of the requirements of the profession and should strive to meet the requirements (TDK, 2017; Fındıklı, 2001).

The process of changing the initial perceptions of nursing with real nursing notion during the training of the students who started nursing education after being influenced by society's perspective about nursing is very important. Internalization and professional identity development, defined as professional socialization, begins at school and continues throughout the working life (Chitty, 2001). The greater the harmony between the self-concept and professional self-concept, the greater the probability that professional practices be effective, and it affects getting a job, period of staying in business and professional choice (Montenegro et al., 2013). The self-concept is seen as the most important factor during the transition from student to professional nursing (Sabancıoğulları et al., 2011).

Nowadays, nursing profession can be performed by both sex groups in developed countries and being a nurse can be preferred as a good profession choice for both women and men. In the nursing profession, it is an important detail that gender has been drawn from the issues of stereotyping and marginalization from past to today. Nevertheless, it should be noted that gender factor comes first in the sociological characteristics of the nursing profession. The number of male students in nursing education at undergraduate level has showed a rapid increase in Turkey especially after 2007. Despite this increase, however, studies have shown that male nurses are stuck between their gender roles and professional roles in Turkey and they want to be in a position of manager rather than working as a nurse in the clinic despite their professional qualifications (Sarı, 2011; Dikmen and Özarlan, 2015, Baykal et al., 2011; Koç et al., 2010; Yılmaz, 2011; Demiray, 2013). In some studies conducted abroad, it is stated that male nurses meet similar problems (Tzeng et al., 2009; Cahou and Lee, 2007). A study in Taiwan has revealed that male student nurses experience role strain more than women, exhibit more negative attitudes towards working in the gynaecology service than women (Tzeng et al., 2009). In another study, male student nurses have stated that they are hesitant to tell other people the department they are studying (Cahou and Lee 2007). It is seen that; male student nurses escape from patient care and leads to more masculine tasks in South Korea (Bang, 2011), they believe that nursing is a female profession in Canada (Bartfay and Bartfay 2007), and they leave their departments without graduation in England (McLaughlin et al., 2010; Mulholland et al., 2008). Results of these surveys have shown that male nurses have similar perceptions and experience the same problems not only in Turkey but also in other countries although they have different cultural characteristics.

Students are influenced by many factors during the choice of nursing profession. These include; nursing profession offers various job opportunities, treats many aspects of patient care, and has various routines, cares for and helps patients and their families; is one of the professions that are growing up today and having job opportunities, offers continuous learning opportunities, witnesses the beginning and end of life, and works in a team atmosphere. All these factors are also sources of motivation for nursing students (Mooney, 2008; McLaughlin et al., 2010). The influence of educators, peers and role models is also important in creating profession expectations and profession choice decisions for students (Price, 2009). When the relevant literature on the reasons of male student nurses for choosing the profession is examined; the wills of family and society, and adequate job opportunities are placed in the first two ranks. However, it is also noteworthy that most of the students are satisfied with studying in the nursing department (Güven et al., 2016; Koç et al., 2010; Baykal et al., 2010). This finding is important in terms of contributing to the development of professional self-concepts of male student nurses who will become professional members for

gaining professional status to nursing profession and providing quality services to the community (Strasen, 1992).

The development of professional self-concept is an important process for every profession. The professional self-concept is the perception of a person as a member of a discipline or a profession (Sabancıoğulları et al., 2011). According to another definition, it is the integration of individual self-concepts with professional qualities adopted with introduction to the profession (Gregg and Magilvy, 2001). In order for this integration to take place, the nurse must have a high sense of professional responsibility and make nursing an important part of her life. Professional self-development begins with school education in the pupillage and continues to develop during the working life (Strasen, 1992). For this reason, it is necessary to examine the relationship between the development of the professional self-concept of male student nurses who have increased in number in recent years, and the factors affecting profession choice.

What kind of a change will male nurses make in the profession in the upcoming years, is closely related to the development level of professional self-concepts that begins with the studentship. In this context, it is important to determine the effect of the factors affecting students' professional choice on the professional self-concept. The professional self-concept of the students affects the choice of profession, the image of the profession, the perception of the profession, the professional satisfaction and exhaustion level (Gregg and Magilvy 2001; Siebens et al., 2006; Sabancıoğulları and Doğan, 2011). Therefore, training of student nurses having strong professional self-concepts, the quality of health care service offered to patients will increase and the development of the profession will gain momentum (Arthur and Randle, 2007; Sabancıoğulları and Doğan, 2011). By this way, this study was planned in order to determine the effects of factors affecting profession choice in male student nurses on the professional self- concept.

2. METHODS

2.1. Design

The study was descriptive and correlational in design.

2.2. Participants and Setting

The universe of the study was composed of 116 male nursing students studying a health college at a Turkish university. Since the study has had the possibility of reaching the whole of the universe, sample selection has not been done and the data has been obtained from the universe. There are 35 male students in first class, 51 male students in the second class, 15 male students in the third class and 15 male students in the fourth class. The study has been conducted with a total of 107 students (response rate of 92%) because of the reason that the student 3 students from the first year, 3 from the second year and 3 students from the third year could not be reached or have refused to participate in the study.

2.3. Data collection and Instruments

Research data has been collected using face-to-face interview technique by questionnaire form. The data has been obtained by using the Profession Choice Scale in Nursing for the factor affecting profession choice of the students, and the Professional Self Concept in Nursing Students Scale to measure the feelings and thoughts for the professional self-concept.

2.3.1. Profession Choice Scale in Nursing (Turkish Version of the HMSO)

Profession Choice Scale in Nursing (PCSN) was developed by Zysberg and Berry (2005) in order to determine the factors affecting nursing students' professional choice and adapted to Turkish by Önler and Saraçoğlu (2010) (Önler and Saraçoğlu, 2010). Turkish form of the scale consists of 17 items and two sub-dimensions, and is a measuring tool being responded in likert type (between 0% and 100%). The sub-dimensions of the scale are professional eligibility (11 items) and vital causes (6 items). Each item in the scale has been rated between 0% (not effective in profession choice) and 100% (most important factor in profession choice). The total score of the scale varies from 0 to 100. Total scale and subscale scores are obtained by dividing the sum of the scores the participants give to the scale into the number of questions in the scale. The high score indicates that there are many factors affecting the professional choice. With regard to the reliability of the instrument, Önler and Saraçoğlu (2010) reported a Cronbach's alpha value of .79. In this study, it was calculated to be .67.

2.3.2. Professional Self Concept in Nursing Students Scale (PSCNSS)

It was developed to evaluate professional self-concepts in student nurses by Sabancıoğulları and Doğan (2011). The scale is a 4-point likert type tool consisting of 45 items and 3 sub-dimensions (I do not agree at all = 1, I do not agree = 2, I agree = 3, I totally agree = 4). 14 items of the scale (1, 4, 10, 20, 25, 27, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35, 39, and 42 items) are expressed reversely, and scored by reversing. The sub-dimensions of the scale are professional satisfaction (8 items), professional proficiency (7 items) and professional qualifications (30 items). The total score of the scale ranges from 45-180. The high score indicates that the professional self-concept of student nurses has improved in the positive direction. Sabancıoğulları and Doğan (2011) reported a Cronbach's alpha value of .88. In this study, it was calculated to be .87.

2.4. Data analysis

In the evaluation of the data about the descriptive characteristics of the students, number and percentage were used; in the determination of the factor affecting profession choice of students and in the evaluation of professional self-concepts, average and standard deviation values were used. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the factors affecting the profession choice of the students and the professional self-concept; regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of the factors affecting the profession choice on professional self-concept.

2.5. Ethical considerations

For the approval of the study, written permission was obtained from a school. The research conforms to the provisions of the Declaration of Helsinki (as revised in Brazil 2013). The study was conducted with the consent of the participant. This means all the students took part in the research willingly. Written permission for the use of PCSN and PSCNSS was granted from Ebru Onler and Selma Sabancıoğulları, respectively.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the distribution of averages of the factors affecting male student nurses' profession choice in nursing. The total score average of the students who participated in the research was 56.56 (SD 11.46), the average score obtained from professional eligibility subscale was 57.66 (SD 16.18) and the average score obtained from vital causes subscale was 54.56 (SD 15.06) (See Table 1).

Table 1. Averages of the factors affecting male student nurses' profession choice in nursing

PCSN Sub-dimensions	X±SS	Total Score
Professional eligibility	57.66±16.18	100
Vital causes	54.56±15.06	100
Total Profession	56.56±11.46	100

Table 2 shows the average scores of total and subscale scores reflecting the students' professional self-concepts. The total score average which the students obtained from professional self-concept scale was 131.37 (SD 14.66), the professional qualifications subscale average score was 89.62 (SD 9.57), the professional satisfaction subscale average score was 21.93 (SD 4.31) and the professional proficiency subscale average score was 19.83 (SD 3.48) (See Table 2).

Table 2. Averages of male student nurses about professional self-concept.

PSCNSS Sub-dimensions	X±SS	Total Scale Score
Professional Satisfaction	21.93±4.31	8-32
Professional Proficiency	19.83±3.48	7-28
Professional Qualifications	89.62±9.57	30-120
Total PSCNSS	131.37±14.66	180

According to correlation analysis results conducted to determine the effect of the factors affecting profession choice in male student nurses on the professional self-concept, a positive, significant and weak relationship has been determined between the total profession choice and the total professional self-concept of the students ($r: .377$). Correlation analysis results have showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between professional eligibility sub-dimension of the students and professional satisfaction, professional proficiency and professional qualifications ($r: .442$ to $.557$); there is a negative and significant relationship between vital causes sub-dimension and professional satisfaction, professional proficiency and professional qualifications ($r: -.216$ to $-.309$) (See Table 3).

Table 3. The relationship between the factors affecting the profession choice of male student nurses and professional self-concepts.

PCSN Sub-dimensions	Professional Satisfaction	Professional Proficiency	Professional Qualifications	Total
Professional eligibility	.557**	.442**	.471**	.576**
Vital causes	-.309**	-.216*	-.276**	-.322**
Total PCSN	.366**	.303**	.302**	.377**

**p < .01 *p < .05

Table 4 shows regression analysis results conducted to determine the effect of the factors affecting profession choice in male student nurses on the professional self-concept. When regression analysis results are examined for professional satisfaction, it is seen that professional eligibility ($t = 5.494$; $p = 0.000$) and vital causes ($t = -3.000$; $p = 0.003$) have a significant effect on professional satisfaction. Professional eligibility and vital causes account for 38.7% of the variance in professional satisfaction.

When the regression analysis results are examined for professional proficiency, it is seen that professional eligibility ($t = 5.003$; $p = 0.000$) and vital causes ($t = -2.221$; $p = 0.029$) have a significant effect on professional proficiency. Professional eligibility and vital causes account for 23.2% of the variance in professional proficiency (See Table 4).

Regression analysis results for professional qualifications indicate that professional eligibility ($t = 5.494$; $p = 0.000$) and vital causes ($t = -3.000$; $p = 0.003$) have significant effects on professional qualifications. Professional eligibility and vital causes account for 28.4% of the variance in the professional qualifications (See Table 4).

Table 4. Regression results for professional satisfaction, professional proficiency and professional qualifications.

Professional Satisfaction					
Independent Variables	B	SH	β	t	p
Professional eligibility	0.144	0.021	0.541	7.040	0.000
Vital causes	-0.080	0.022	-0.277	-3.608	0.000
	F= 32.872	R2= 0.387	P= 0.000		
Professional Proficiency					
Independent Variables	B	SH	β	t	p
Professional eligibility	0.093	0.019	0.431	5.003	0.000
Vital causes	-0.044	0.020	-0.191	-2.221	0.029
	F= 15.676	R2= 0.232	P= 0.000		
Professional Qualifications					
Independent Variables	B	SH	β	t	p
Professional eligibility	0.270	0.49	0.457	5.494	0.000
Vital causes	-0.159	0.053	-0.249	-3.000	0.003
	F= 20.615	R2= 0.284	P= 0.000		

4.DISCUSSION

Qualified care is required to promote positive relationships between the nurse and the patient and to provide qualified medical services due to changing sense of health. In order to meet such a demand, the ability of nurses to provide services based on knowledge, experience and technology requires a positive attitude as a professional. This will be possible by supporting the development of the professional self-concept of nursing students and determining the factors affecting profession choice (Thin and Khorshid 2015; Mooney et al., 2008; Weller et al., 2006).

In this study, it has been determined that the students are affected above the average from the factors affecting the profession choice. Similar results are seen to be obtained from other studies on this subject (Kalkim et al., 2015; Ergün and Güzel, 2016; McLaughlin et al., 2010; Özveren et al., 2017). The appropriateness of the profession for themselves, vital causes and needs can be important for students in the selection of the profession. It is a desired behavioural characteristic that students choose being a nurse and make conscious professional choice by considering the profession to be appropriate. It is thought that these preferences made with this positive perception will be effective in enabling a productive education life, providing qualified healthcare service in the future, offering professional satisfaction and increasing professional loyalty. Another factor that the student considers in choosing a profession is vital causes. Vital causes are the professional preference reason that is shaped by the effects of individual's family, relatives and environment (Sabancıoğulları and Doğan, 2011; İnce and Khorsid, 2015). In the study by Nilsson and

Stomberg (2008), male nurses stated that they preferred the profession because of job security, its opportunities and flexibility. In another study, it was determined that male students were most affected by family and environment, and great job opportunities; besides they are pleased to study nursing education (Güven et al., 2016). Although male students' satisfaction in the nursing department seems to be positive in terms of showing that they adopted nursing profession, it is thought that the pressure of family and environment rather than their own opinions in professional choices may lead to problems such as lack of job satisfaction and weakening of professional loyalty in the future (Güven et al., 2016). In order to prevent these negative aspects from affecting the quality of care, it is necessary to establish a positive professional sense in the students, to reduce the environmental factors affecting the professional choice and to provide professional motivation.

The professional self-concept is related to how individuals view themselves as a member of the profession and how they feel as a nurse in the nursing profession (Karadag et al., 2013). While professional self-concept of nurses is one of the most curious topics, there have been a limited number of studies on this subject in the literature (Karadag et al., 2004; Weller et al., 2006). These limited studies are seen to have been conducted on nurse managers and nurses working in psychiatry clinics (Şimşek, 2014; Küçük, 2016). In our study, it has been determined that male student nurses have a positive sense of the professional self-concept above the average. When this finding is compared with the results of studies conducted with nurses, it is seen that male student nurses have a more positive sense of professional self-concept (Siebens et al., 2006; Sabancıoğulları and Doğan, 2014; Şimşek, 2014). The fact that the average score of the male student nurses is higher than the working nurses' is considered as a remarkable and positive finding. Because it is assumed that professional self-development starts at school during the pupillage and continues to develop during the working life (Strasen, 1992). However, it can be expected that the student nurses having professional self-concepts above the average will have more advanced leadership, communication skills, be more flexible, be more talented and have more professional satisfaction.

In the study, it has been determined that the professional satisfaction of student nurses is above the average. Professional satisfaction is one of the important factors that form professional self-concept, and expresses the content and satisfaction of the nurses' regarding their profession (Sabancıoğulları and Doğan, 2011). It is important to provide professional satisfaction for increasing professional content and motivation of nurses (Karamanoğlu et al., 2009). Fulfilment of roles and responsibilities willingly is also important for creating positive patient outcomes in the nursing profession. For this reason, it is considered positive that the professional satisfaction of the students is above the average in this study.

The other two important factors forming professional self-concept are professional proficiency and professional qualifications. In the study, it has been determined that students perceive their professional proficiency and professional qualifications above the average. When this result is compared with the study on nurse managers by Şimşek (2014), the professional proficiency level of the nurses has been founded higher, and the level related to the professional qualifications has been founded lower than the male students. Professional attitudes and skills include feelings, thoughts and beliefs about the qualifications of the profession and their fulfilment. Professional proficiency includes self-evaluation in terms of the professional qualifications required to fulfil the nursing profession (problem solving skills, decision making skills, professional knowledge and skills, professional proficiency, etc.). The results of the research are considered to be positive in terms of male student nurses' regarding themselves as competent and qualified for the practices of nursing profession, although they are not at the desired level. It is believed that reinforcement of these perceptions of students and promotion of their professional motivations will make positive effects on the development of professional self-concept and health care practices.

In the study, it has been determined that the professional eligibility factor affecting professional choice, affects the professional satisfaction, professional proficiency and professional qualifications of the students. In the study by Sabancıoğulları and Doğan (2014), the PSCNSS general average score of the nurses who have selected the profession voluntarily and are satisfied with their profession and who are members of the Turkish Nurses Association, has been found significantly higher. Similar results have been found in the study by Karadağ, Hisar and Elbaş (2004). Therefore, it is considered that if the profession is chosen willingly and being considered appropriate, professional satisfaction will increase and the practices performed willingly and contently will affect the quality of patient care and professional development positively. Besides, performing the roles and responsibilities required by the profession willingly, increases internal motivation, supports continuous learning, contributes to the development of professional qualifications, and enables individuals to feel competent professionally while performing their practices. In other words, it

develops professional self-concept. Nurses with strong professional self-concept, have a say in the society, in health care environments and in the politics on the implementation of the profession, and represent the profession robustly. As a result, it can be said that the professional self-concept increases when students consider professional appropriateness in selecting a profession.

In the study, it has become evident that vital causes affecting profession choice affect the students' professional satisfaction, professional proficiency and professional qualifications negatively. When the articles included in the vital causes subscale have been analysed, some statements have been encountered like; "I would like to have another job but I could not", "I chose nursing because I thought that nursing would be a constantly popular profession", "I had no other chance rather than nursing", "I do not think that I will be unemployed in nursing", "I can make good money in nursing", and "There is no other job that I can do other than nursing ". This implies that the statements about vital causes define nursing as a profession that can make one's living with the possibility of finding an easy job without living an economic worry, rather than being a profession option, a contributing and professional occupation. This result shows that professional self-concept is decreasing as the students take into consideration vital causes in professional choice. It is stated that the inadequate development of professional self during education and working process leads to important problems such as not having a say the professional field, failing to meet the accepted standards of the profession and failing to fulfil the role of nursing successfully (Deppoliti, 2008; McKenna and Gren 2004; Öhlen and Segesten 1998; Costello, 2004). It is stated that, the greater the agreement between the self-concept and professional self-concept, the greater the probability that professional practices are likely to be effective, and it affects recruitment, job retention and profession choice (Karadağ et al., 2013).

This study presented some limitations. The sample of this study was composed of male nurses from only one university. A broader study involving other nursing students groups and different parts of the country is needed in order to generalize to other students. In-depth researches using qualitative interviewing methods will be useful in determining how students with different professional self-concepts evaluate their clinical performance.

5. CONCLUSION

As a result of the study, it has been determined that male student nurses' sense of the factors affecting profession choice and professional self-concept are above the average level. It has been determined that there is a positive and significant relationship between professional eligibility subscale and professional satisfaction, professional proficiency and professional qualifications, and there is a negative and significant relationship between vital causes subscale and professional satisfaction, professional proficiency and professional qualifications of the students. It has been found that the factors affecting the professional choice are the predictors of professional self-concepts of male student nurses. In the direction of these results, it is suggested that educators should be role models by providing counselling, professional and social support and encourage their students in the positive professional identity development of the students.

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