ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Image of Nurses Perceived by High School Students in Yogyakarta City

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Abstract

Misperception of and misunderstanding about nurses among high school students will affect their interest in continuing their education to nursing department and will affect recruitment of nurse health personnel. This study aims at providing an illustration of image of nurse perceived by high school students in Yogyakarta city. It is a descriptive research using cross sectional approach involving 415 third grade students of Natural Science Program (IPA) in Yogyakarta City in January 2016. Data were collected using a questionnaire made by researchers by modifying the research of Seranath & Gunawerdana and questionnaire of May et al. Data were analyzed through univariate and bivariate analysis using chi square statistic test. The results of the study showed that of 415 respondents, 54.9% of respondents had high knowledge of nursing, 47% of respondents had positive perception of nurses, and 49.4% of respondents had interest in nursing. The results of statistical tests indicated that there is no correlation of students' knowledge and perceptions of nurses with their desire to continue education to the department of nursing. Recommendations: It is necessary to improve public perception for the image of nurses by providing information to high school students about nursing and its employment prospects.

Keywords: High school; image; interest; nurses; perception

Introduction

Nursing services have a strategic position in determining the quality of health services in hospitals because the number of nurses is the most and they have the longest contact with patients. Nurse provides 24-hour continuous service to patients making it the only healthcare profession in the hospital that provides much of the perception of health care to patients (Nursalam, 2011). The accumulation of perception from patients when nurses provide health services can be one of the indicators in creating the image of nurses in the public eye, both positive and negative.

A positive image of the nurse can be created when nurses can display good behavior to meet patient's expectations. These behaviors include: Building strong relationship with patients and other personnel (Porter, Edwards, & Granger, 2009), being always friendly, skilled, capable and having good moral responsibility (Suhaemi, 2003), and being professional and having intellectual competence (Hamid, 2000).

Despite such positive images, the image of nurses among most Indonesian people nowadays does not exist as expected. It is a pity that there is a paradigm in the society that "nurse is a doctors' handmaiden (Emeghebo, 2012). The era of globalization and free market have resulted in high

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competition in providing health services that require improved quality and professionalism of health human resources, including nursing human resources (Anjaswarni, Keliat, & Sabri, 2002; Kusnanto, 2004). The lack of hospitality value (Wulandari, 2008) and the incidence rate of nursing errors (Santoso, 2012) are examples of poor nurses' performance in providing services that have impacts on receiving criticisms and complaints.

The image of nurses inappropriately appear in mass media such as *suster ngesot* (scary sliding nurse), *suster keramas* (evil nurse), and *suster gepeng* (planate nurse). Kalisch, Begeny, & Neumann (2007) argue the profession of nurse is identical with women and many media describe nurses as women in sexual dresses. According to Oxford Dictionary, sexy is Sexually attractive or exciting (Oxford team, 2017). This undermines nurses' reputation and impedes the development of the image of nurses.

Poor perception and understanding of nurses also affect the recruitment of health care workers. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2011) states that the shortage of nurses is increasing globally. One of the causes is low interest of younger generation in nursing careers. Attracting graduates to enter nursing schools and careers is a challenge encountered by many countries in the world, such as England, the United States, Australia, China (International Council of Nurses, 2008; Drury, Francis, & Chamber, 2009).

It is important to decide a career selection since high school level. Gottfredson (2002) argues that adolescence is a time for exploration and formation of career identity. Those who in late adolescence and have completed high school will continue their studies to university so that they are encouraged to choose majors according to their talents and interests. Major selection and career exploration in late adolescence will bring them to a decision-making process (Purwanta, 2012). The results of a research on 206 high school students in Medan City using Career Maturity Inventory, which was translated into Indonesian, indicated that high school students are still looking for more information about their careers and also not confident in their abilities (Eliana, Supriyanti, & Tuapattinaja, 2016).

At the beginning of such career decision- making, they often have inadequate information about nursing to support their consideration of making nursing as one of the desired ideal careers (Hoke, 2006). The perceptions of high school students about ease, prestige, and scope of employment in nursing are not yet known. Therefore, it is necessary to find out the image of nurses perceived by high school students in order to assess the opinion of younger generation and their interest in nursing career.

Method

This descriptive research employed cross sectional study design. It was conducted in January 2016 in 5 schools, namely 4 public high schools and 1 private high school taken using simple random sampling with lottery method. 417 third grade students of Natural Sciences Program were involved in the study. The inclusion criteria included receiving permission from the school, in the third grade of Natural Sciences Program and present on the day of data collection.

The data were collected using questionnaires consisting of 4 sections that explored respondents' demographic data, knowledge level, perception level, and level of desire to continue their education in nursing. The validity and reliability of the questionnaires were tested in November 2015 and January 2016 at SMAN 6 Yogyakarta. The questionnaire containing knowledge level of high school students about nursing was created and developed by the researchers, whose results of validity test was 0.314 until 0.641 ($r_{table}=0.312$) and Chronbach alpha value was $\alpha=0.765$. In regard to the questionnaire containing level perception of the nurse, the researchers modified the questionnaire from the research of Senarath & Gunawerdana (2011). Its validity range was 0.595 until 0.856 and Cronbach alpha value was $\alpha=0.947$. Meanwhile, the questionnaire containing the level of desire to continue in nursing education was also modified by the researchers from the questionnaire of May, Austin, & Champion (1988), whose results of validity test was 0.410 to 0.832 and Cronbach alpha value was $\alpha=0.909$. The Reliability Coefficient of Cronbach alpha (r_{11}) was 0.624.

Univariate analysis was employed to describe the characteristics of respondents including: age, sex, parent's occupation, and variables in question (level of knowledge, perception, and desire/interest) by using proportion and percentage system. Bivariate analysis was employed to explain the correlation of knowledge level of high school students and perception of nurses with desire to continue education in the department of nursing by using chi square statistical test because the data were normally distributed. The research obtained permission from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Gadjah Mada on 02 December 2015. The data collection also obtained permission from the concerned parties at schools, and all respondents had signed informed consent.

Results

Table 1 shows that most respondents are 17 years old, and most of them are female. Most of the respondents also have experience of being hospitalized. A small percentage of respondents have parents who work as healthcare workers.

Table 2 shows that respondents with high knowledge level and low knowledge level about nursing as well as levels of perception and interest have insignificant difference of percentage.

Table 3 contains open statements about the perception on the image of nurses and the reasons for choosing/not choosing nursing as an option after graduation. The collected statements are grouped and sorted based on what most respondents wrote.

The results of statistic analysis on sex and the values of knowledge and interest in Table 4 show that there is difference of mean value for female and male respondent group. On average, female respondents have higher value of knowledge and interest than male respondents.

This study shows there is no correlation of knowledge and perception of high school level students with interest in continuing education in nursing (Table 5).

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents (High School Students) in Yogyakarta City in 2016 (n=415)

Characteristics of Respondents	n	%	Mean±SD
Age (years old)			17.29±0.589
15	2	0.5	
16	18	4.3	
17	256	61.7	
18	136	32.8	
19	2	0.5	
20	1	0.2	
Sex			
Male	172	41.4	
Female	243	58.6	
Parent's Occupation			
Healthcare workers	30	7.2	
Non-Healthcare workers	380	91.6	
Healthcare workers and Non-Healthcare workers	5	1.2	
Experience of being hospitalized			
Yes	217	52.3	
No	198	47.7	

Table 2. Levels of Knowledge, Perception, and Interest of High School Students on Nursing (n = 415)

	n	%	Mean±SD
Knowledge Score	415	100	11.39±1.450
High knowledge (score > 11.39)	228	54.9	12.41±0.493
Low knowledge (score ≤ 11.39)	187	45.1	10.14±1.242
Perception Score	415	100	57.57±6.595
Positive perception (score > 57.57)	195	47	63.46±3.668
Negative perception (score ≤ 57.57)	220	53	52.36±3.489
Interest score	415	100	36.82±6.682
Have interests in nursing (score > 36.82)	205	49.4	41.75±4.893
Do not have interests in nursing (score ≤ 36.82)	210	50.6	32.02±4.893

Table 3. Open statements concerning the perception on the image of nurses and the reasons for choosing/not choosing nursing as an option after graduating from high school

Open Statement		n	%
Perception of the image of nurses	Nurse is a noble job. Sincerely helping patients/fellows selflessly, sincerely doing things that may be burdensome for others, and full of patience and affection.	32	7.7
	The nurse is polite, friendly, kind, smiley, cool, clean, and caring about the surroundings, motherly (so that it is more favorable if nurses are women because they care more).	36	8.7
	Although not all, there are nurses who are sassy, rude, vicious, impatient, not persevering, and uncommunicative.	50	12
Reasons for choosing/not choosing nursing	Nurse is a noble profession. I want to be a nurse because I am happy to help others, make the sick healthy and make people around always healthy. In addition to being broad-minded, being a nurse can serve the community, care for others, and concern for social matters.	19	4.6
	Nurses will always be needed. Employment opportunities for nurses and healthcare sector will be highly needed and have good employment prospects.	7	1.7
	(I am) not interested in nursing. Being a nurse is not suited to passion, interests, hobbies.	66	15.9
	(I) already have other dreams to achieve which are best suited to skills, hobbies, interests and abilities.	53	12.8

Table 4. Characteristics of Respondents with Values of Knowledge, Perception, and Interest

Characteristics of Respondents	Knowledge		Perception		Interest	
	Mean±SD	<i>P Value</i>	Mean±SD	<i>P Value</i>	Mean±SD	<i>P Value</i>
Sex						
Male	11.16±1.472	0.006*	57.48±6.349	0,814	34.99±6.247	<0.001*
Female	11.56±1.414		57.64±6.776		38.12±6.686	
Parent's Occupation						
Healthcare Worker	11.70±1.264	0.449	58.37±6.478	0.220	36.30±6.819	0.774
Non-Healthcare Worker	11.36±1.467		57.45±6.605		36.89±6.629	
Mixed	11.60±1.140		62.20±5.541		35.20±10.686	
Experience of being hospitalized						
Yes	11.38±1.502	0.855	57.87±6.756	0.337	37.34±7.225	0.102
No	11.40±1.396		57.25±6.416		36.26±5.998	

* If $p < 0.05$, it indicates that there is a difference of mean between the characteristics of respondents with each other

Table 5. Level of knowledge and perception of students with interest in continuing education in nursing (n = 415)

		Interest				<i>P Value</i>
		Disinterested		Interested		
		n	%	n	%	
Knowledge	Low	91	48.7	96	51.3	0.474
	High	119	52.2	109	47.8	
	Total	210	50.6	205	49.4	
Perception	Negative	119	54.1	101	45.9	0.131
	Positive	91	46.7	104	53.3	
	Total	210	50.6	205	49.4	

* $p < 0.05$ indicated that there is a correlation of knowledge and perception with interest

Discussion

Most respondents are 17 years old. According to Monks (1987/2002), this age belongs to mid-to-late adolescence. In accordance with internal factors that affect perception is one of them is experience (Walgito, 2004). The more mature a person is, the higher the experience and knowledge are gained. At this age, there are developmental tasks that must be met. One of which is preparing for a future career.

Most of the respondents are women. Eccles (in Papalia, 1978/2008) argues that sex may affect the choice of work. Eccles states that male adolescents are more likely to take engineering and computers, while female prefers nursing and teaching. The results of this study also prove that female respondents have higher interest in continuing education in nursing than male respondents.

The younger generation's view of nursing as a career choice is affected by the views of parents and friends on nurses (Law & Arthur, 2003). McLaughlin, Mountray, & Moore (2010) reports that family and relatives who work as nurses serve an important source of support and help student to provide a realistic picture of how to be a nurse. This is supported by the results of the study that 7.2% of respondents have parents who work as healthcare workers. However, the results of this study show that parent's occupation does not contribute to students' knowledge, perception, and interest in nursing.

Every person perceives things around through what he/she has learned or his/her past experiences, along with other things such as attitude, hope, fantasy and memory (Afiatin, 1993). The results of this study show that 217 respondents (52.3%) have experience of being hospitalized. Respondents' experiences and memories when they were ill and treated may affect their perception of the nurse. This is supported by an open statement indicating that the experience of being hospitalized or the experience of accompanying sick/treated family members may provide various perception of the nurse. When nurses work and behave as expected, respondent may have a good perception, and vice versa. According to them, this is because the characteristics of nurses in each hospital are different.

Nurses have important and irreplaceable roles and responsibilities in healthcare services. However, such roles and responsibilities are not properly known by the public or students who choose to continue their studies in the department of nursing (Andsoy et al., 2012; Güdücü Tüfekçi & Yıldız, 2009; Şirin et al., 2008 in Yilmaz et al., 2016). Table 2 shows that 187 respondents (45.1%) have low knowledge scores. In general, it is narrowly assumed that nurses only have limited responsibilities, such as taking blood, measuring blood pressure, and administering drugs (Yilmaz et al., 2016).

Porter, Edwards, & Granger's research (2009) explains problems for the future of the nursing profession, one of which is misperception about nursing among high school students. Holding Summer camp experience (Flores & Ashe, 2013) and providing information in high schools, presentations, nurse shadowing programs (Bang et al., 2011) are among efforts that can be carried out to increase students' knowledge of nursing and help to change the poor image of nurses.

Image is public perception of the company or its products. Image can also represent a person's knowledge of an object (Mugianti, 2009). The image of nurse can be created from patients' experience on the healthcare services they have received, either their own experienced or the family or friends' experience delivered by word of mouth. This image can also be created by the influence of news from mass media. The results of the study show that out of 415 respondents, 47% have a positive perception of the nurse and 53% have a negative perception. The difference in percentage is not too significant, that is 6% between positive and negative perceptions indicating that respondents have almost similar opinions, or it cannot be said that the perception of respondents completely is negative.

The perception of nurse profession can be affected by several factors. Rakhmat (2011) mentions that factors that can affect a person's perception, among others, are functional, structural, and cultural factors. Past experiences and memories are part of the functional factor. Past experience can be an experience of receiving healthcare services and experience of interacting directly with the nurses while accompanying sick family members or relatives.

One of the main problems for adolescents is making a career choice (Neilson & McNally, 2010). Purwanta (2012) states that one of the internal factors that affect a career choice in adolescents is interest. The results of the study show that 205 respondents (49.4%) have an interest to continue education in nursing. This shows that high school students' interest in nursing in Yogyakarta City is popular, provided that there are many career options other than nursing, both in health and non-health careers. This is consistent with the results of Desiana's study (2012) which states that 59% of respondents have high interest in continuing education in nursing.

Although many respondents have interests in continuing education in nursing, not all of them will make the Nursing Study Program an option when taking a university entrance examination. Regarding one of the questionnaire statements, "Nursing Study Program is one of the Study Programs that I will choose in the university entrance examination", 83.6% of respondents gave negative answers (disagree and strongly disagree). The result of this study is consistent with the study of Neilson & Jones (2012) that out of the 702 students who made career choices, only 8% chose nursing as the primary choice. Perhaps, respondents will choose nursing as an alternative option after their first choice of major is not accepted, or due to gender and family influences, as the respondents wrote in the open statement.

A reason for the respondents in this study makes nursing as a career choice is that nurse is a noble profession. They are happy if they can help families and others, serve and care for the community. This is in consistent with the study of Ben Natan & Becker (2010) stating that respondents who have a career interest in nursing tend to be motivated by the desire to help others, not for personal benefits.

Respondents who did not choose nursing as a career option gave reasons that they are not interested in the health field from the beginning, do not hospital environment, are afraid of blood, needles, and others. Most of them already have other dreams that they think fit with their skills, hobbies, interests, and abilities. This is consistent with the statement of Johnson & Mortimer (2002) that an ideal career is suitability between a person and his work, best suited to interests, needs, and personality.

According to Law & Arthur (2003), several factors may influence students to choose nursing as a career choice such as social demography (sex, family income), perceptions of nursing as a career, and interest. The results of this study shows female have higher average value of interest than male. The result of this study is consistent with the study of Neilson & Jones (2012) stating that female students are 3.77 times more likely to consider nursing as a career choice than men. Out of the 199 students who consider nursing as a career choice, 155 are female. The result also shows that female has higher average value of knowledge about nursing than men. This is consistent with the statement of Hurlock (1980/2012) that one of the aspects that affect interest is cognitive.

David Krech (1962) in Ferlisa (2008) revealed that one of the factors affecting perception is frame of reference, that is knowledge. The level of knowledge of respondents will affect the perception of nurse. However, the results show that there is no correlation between knowledge and perception. This may be due to many factors that affect perception, such as interest, experience, and so forth. Hurlock (1980/2012) explains cognitive is one of the aspects that affect interest. However, the results of this study indicate that there is no correlation between knowledge about nurses and interest in continuing education in nursing.

The public perception of the nurse can serve as a picture of the nurse profession. A poor picture of nurse may affect the quality and quantity of individuals who choose nursing as a profession. If the public constantly gives poor and inaccurate perceptions of nurses, people will see that nursing is an unwanted career. The results of this study indicated that there is no correlation between students' perception and interest in continuing education in nursing. The result of bivariate analysis is in consistent with the research of Desiana (2012) that there is no correlation between perception of third grade students in SMAN 1 Cibinong about nurse profession and interest in continuing education in nursing. This may affected by several factors, for example, they already have other dreams in accordance with hobby and personality, or family factors as respondents wrote in the open statement.

This study has several limitations. First, the questionnaires used to assess the knowledge of nursing have questions with "True" or "False" answers. Therefore, further follow-up is needed to ensure whether respondents really know the answer of the statements in the questionnaires, or just guess them. The next limitation is the result of the description of the interest of high school students in continuing their education nursing. The limitation is the absence of follow-up in the respondents to prove whether interest in the nursing field is translated into the choice of majors in the university entrance examination. It was not possible during the data collection to ensure whether respondents

who have an interest in continuing education in nursing will choose nursing as a choice of majors in the university entrance examination.

Conclusion and Recommendation

High school students in Yogyakarta city have high knowledge and positive perception towards the image of nurse profession. However, there is no correlation of knowledge and perception of high school students towards the image of nurses with the desire to make nursing as a career choice ($P > 0.05$). This study recommends that nurses improve public image and perception providing information to high school students about nursing and its employment prospects.

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