

The Image of Nursing as a Profession Among Students of the Military Technical Nursing School in Alexandria

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Abstract: Nursing has considerable progresses towards becoming professional in recent decades in comparison with previous decades and produced a scientific base by academic preparing programs for it. Now, it is the time to be aware of the images that they draw as professionals for themselves and others. Since, these images are forming during study and probing the way of forming perceptions as image of profession and the effective factors on it had not been considered by students till now and since core concepts. So, this study has been done for detecting the profession's image among nursing students of the Military Technical Nursing School in Alexandria. This study is a descriptive one and aimed at determining the image of nursing as a profession among students in Military Technical Nursing School as well to propose changes in relation to students image of nursing as a profession. The participants of this study were 120 nursing students who were in 1st, 2nd and 3rd years. A structured interview questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect data about the socio demographic characteristics of students and their parents as well to identify the image of nursing as a profession among students such as reasons of enrolling to the Military Technical Nursing School, image toward Military and Civilian hospitals, causes of positive and negative image and their suggestion for improving nursing image. The study results revealed that the highest percentages of students in Alexandria had a positive image of military nursing as a profession except the students who's residency is Mersa Matrouh City. This portrayed from the military uniform, a good chance for work with a good salary demonstrated a positive influence of their image to nursing as a profession. However, working in the afternoon and night shifts and on Fridays and vacations, doing non nursing duties, calling the nurse at any time, the method of punishment if mistakes occurred had a negative influence on the image of nursing among the highest percentages of students. The study recommended further investigation for the negative views of nurses. Military hospitals should modify working condition and promote friendly environments for students with greater flexibility in work shifts.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing has been identified as an emerging profession for at least 150 years. The image of professional Nursing continues to evolve and is significantly impacted by the media, community perception, women's issues

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and roles, and a high technology health care environment. It is directly related to what the profession offers society and the values placed on that service⁽¹⁾. Image is often defined as mental representation that influences how individual see all aspects of life, included nurses and nursing, as it helps them in making judgments and expressing themselves^(1,2). Nurses image contribute in define their confidence they have in their ability and influence how they behave⁽³⁾.

The army forces established the Military Hospital Technical Nursing School in Alexandria in 1983, since social significance means the impact of the society's attitudes, assumptions, and point of view about nurses^(4,5). The image which students have of the nursing profession is influenced by and in turn influences how the public see them and the productivity of the nurses in their job

is related to its image. It is the satisfaction of the nurse with their job, including all aspects whether financial, social prestige, respect, and sense of achievement that drives the instinct of a nurse to give more in her job⁽⁴⁾.

Nursing students represent the future nursing manpower. Entering the profession gives one a various choice of type of work and opportunities to use their acquired knowledge and skills in area of choice⁽⁶⁾. Ligelkis⁽⁷⁾ admitted the factors influencing image as a career such as; community image, media dissemination, philosophy of nursing profession, salary, and community needs.

The worldwide shortage of nurses has attracted much discussion within the nursing profession. The media reminds the community that the current shortfall in individuals who are pursuing nursing as a career and those who are leaving the

profession has massive implications for their image.⁽⁸⁾ To attract more individuals to the profession, a positive image of nursing needs to be engendered by nurse educators and the general community. According to Bacon *et al.*, the stereotypical images of nurse and nursing persist. The nurse is depicted as a battleaxe, a sex symbol, or in a subordinate role and handmaiden to the doctor. These persistent images do not serve to encourage young people into the profession and do not indicate the diverse career pathways that are available⁽⁹⁾.

Unfortunately the conventional image persists and it is these images that prospective nursing students may retain when seeing themselves as nurses; this factor is of significance to this present study. Recent research, however, reports a change in how the public perceive nurses^(6,9). Nurses are now viewed as

being well-educated and independent thinkers and this perspective may reflect that vision that the nurse is now a major player within a high-tech medical world. Conversely, Cowin (2001) said that girls are moving away from the stereotypical female careers and are becoming more attracted to traditional male occupations. If this was the case; the nursing profession may be losing a valuable opportunity to recruit future nurses⁽⁸⁾. As the Australian and global population age it is imperative that action is taken to attract more individuals to nursing and also act to reduce the attrition of future student and qualified nurses (Campbell and Dickson, 1996)⁽¹⁰⁾.

Recently, nursing profession is facing many crises due to lack of interest among the young to choose nursing as a career. In western societies such as Canada , USA , and the United Kingdom, nursing is one of the few occupations

that is acceptable for women from all socio-economic class⁽¹¹⁾. To the contrary, in other western societies, nursing has not been acceptable occupation in a number of countries⁽¹²⁾.

In Egypt , the reasons of nursing shortage includes negative and bad image of the nursing profession in the society, hard work profession which needs great effort, night shifts which is rejected by the family, low salary and lack promotion^(13,14). Military technical Nursing school in Alexandria equip nursing students with essential knowledge of science humanities and skills in nursing to deal with current community needs. This present study could endorse the view of nursing students that will help to foster within the students a realistic and positive image of the nursing profession in education strategy.

Aim of the study

This study was carried out to determine the image of nursing as a profession among students in Military Technical Nursing School.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Material

Setting:

The study was carried out in the Military Technical Nursing School in Alexandria.

Sample

All students enrolled in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades of the Military Technical Nursing School of the academic year 2006 – 2007 were included in the study. They came from different back ground of 6 cities. All students were girls .The total number of students were 120 as follows:

- 30 students of the 1st grade.
- 28 students of the 2nd grade.
- 62 students of the 3rd grade.

All students were willing to participate in the present study.

Tool of the study

- A structured interview questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on reviewing current related literature. The questionnaire was used to collect data about the socio demographic characteristics of students and their parents, the place of origin and residency as well to identify the image of nursing as a profession among students such as reasons of enrolling to the Military Technical Nursing School, Image toward Military and Civilian hospitals, causes of positive and negative image and their suggestion for improving nursing image.
- All grades of study were included to portray the image about nursing of newly admitted students in grade one and those in grade 2 and 3 who get various experience and became more realistic after studying and practicing nursing in the technical school and at the Military hospital.
- A pilot study was carried out on 15 students of different grades in order to ensure clarity of the questions and to estimate the time needed to fill the questionnaire. The needed modification was made prior data collection.
- The structured questionnaire was answered by students in a time period of 20 minutes
- Data were collected in February 2007.

Methods

- A permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Director of the technical nursing school of the military hospital.

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was done using SPSS V. 9 of Windows package.

Frequencies, percentages and Pearson X^2 were calculated. Mean Score Percent and Standard Deviation were used as an index of measurement. The threshold of significance was less than 5%.

RESULTS

Table (1) shows students and their parents personal data. This table revealed that the mean age of students was 16 ± 1.627 years old. The majority (82.5%) of the studied sample had the preparatory certificate with grades more than 75% & they prefer to enroll in the Military nursing School rather than the Secondary school. The Military Nursing School in Alexandria is responsible for enrolling of students from 5 Governorates only which are. Kafer El-Shikh , Dakahlia, El-Gharbia , Baharah, Mersa-Matrouh as well as Alexandria Governorates. Data revealed that more than half (54.1%) of students were from Gharbia , Kafer El-Shikh Governorates

and no one from Mersa Matrouh Governorate .

Data clarified that 90% of the sample has a big family size where the number of siblings were 3 and more. As regards to parents' level of education, the same table shows that nearly half of their fathers (48.3%) and the majority mothers (71.7%) were illiterate compared to 35% of fathers and 24.1% of mothers who received primary education respectively. Regarding occupation status about half (56.7%) of their fathers are farmers, while 32.5% are working with free job. Administrative work was found with the least percent (5.8%). Nearly all mothers were housewives (90%).

Figure (1) revealed the source of students information about Military technical nursing school. It portrayed that the majority (65.2%) of students ranks their family/ relatives opinion as the first source of their choice. The lowest

percent (2.8%) was street posters.

In relation to the reasons of enrolling students to the Military nursing school; table (2) showed that students in preparatory certificate were the main intervening variable of the majority (65.2%) of students and 66.6% think that they will become officers after finishing the study, while, 85 % said that they gain a good job with a good salary, 58.3% enroll because they like the Military uniform 6.6% mentioned that they enroll with the school because their social life stress them to enroll with indoor school, and 4.1% said that they enroll to the school according to their family's desire only. On the other hand 91.6% of the sample's grades can qualify them to enroll with secondary school .

Data revealed that 42.5% of the sample mentioned that their concept about nursing as a profession in Military hospitals didn't differ than nursing

as a profession in another civilian hospitals, while 37.5% of sample disagree . The same table revealed that 71.6% of the sample mentioned that nursing Military hospital is very well because the advanced machines while 19.1% of the sample didn't know about the facilities of the Military hospitals. The majority of the sample (65%) stated that they like to work in the Military hospital because they advance in their career while, 20.8% didn't know about the job advancement

In relation to the other privilege of working in Military hospital data showed that 74.1% of the sample agree. Data revealed that only 8.3% of the sample dislike the work in the Military hospitals.

The majority of the sample 75.8% revealed that nursing in the Military hospital is a very well job because it depends on the Army rules and strict regulations. Data clarified that 15% of the

sample didn't like their working in military hospitals because they can't enroll with nursing collage because the Army laws didn't allow them to complete their studies. The differences were statistically significant where $X^2=4.76$, $P< 0.05\%$.

As regard the negative images of work in the military hospital; table 4 showed that 71.6% of the sample viewed negatively because working in the night shift, 62.5% for working on Friday's and vacations, as well as, 62.5 % for calling the nurse at any time, and 61.6% mentioned that the nurse did a lot of non nursing duties, also 56.6% said that they were exhausted from standing for a long time, and complain of work stressors and 78.3%, 76.6% respectively viewed negatively to the manner of punishment.

Table (5) clarified that 70% of the students mentioned that the society respect the military nurse while, 51.6% of the sample had a negative view from the

films and T.V view toward nursing profession because working in the afternoon & night shifts. On the other hand 16.6% of the sample mentioned that the afternoon & night shifts, effect negatively on the Egyptian man desire to marry a nurse, 62.5% of the sample disagreed. Of the sample; 58.3% viewed that the nurse life is unstable with the husband because the afternoon & night shifts. The majority of the sample (71.6%), (74.1%), (67.5%) mentioned that they can't enroll with any study, share in social activities and work in private clinic.

DISCUSSION

Nursing is a vital component in every country's health care system⁽¹⁴⁾. According to Mansour (1992)⁽¹⁵⁾, nursing image, in the Middle East has been traditionally viewed as a female profession for lower social classes and this is in agreement with the present

study result which showed that the majority of students (82.5%) prefer to enroll to the military nursing school while they obtained grades which enable them to enroll to the public secondary school because the availability of employment opportunities in the Army Forces and financial reward are appropriate incentives for choosing a career in military nursing. Similar result is reported by other studies^(11,12,16,17,18).

Military nursing school in Alexandria is responsible for accepting students from 5 cities as well as, students from Alexandria. The cities are: Tanta, Kafer El Shaikh, Damanshour, El Mansoura, and Marsa Matrouh. It is clear from the present data that there is no students enrolled from Marsa Matrouh city. This finding may be due to poor advertise of the military nursing school to the students in preparatory schools in Matrouh City.

Concerning the causes of enrollment of students to military nursing school, data clarified that the majority of them have a range believe, they thought that, they will become an officer after finishing the secondary nursing school, as well; more than half of the sample like the military uniform which differentiate between them and the other public schools with good appearance.

On the other hand, the minority of the sample mentioned that enrollment of the military nursing school is the decision of their parents only. Heath P.(2001)⁽¹⁹⁾, stated that young students may be applying to nursing programs responding to parent's dream instead of their own. In the contrary, the minority of the sample stated that they enroll to the Military nursing school because they have social problems and the school is indoor.

Military nursing as an appreciated

profession was perceived by the majority of students. These findings may be due to the military working system which is based on loyalty, discipline and accuracy. These findings were similar to those of May et al (1991)⁽²⁰⁾, who found that nursing as an appreciated profession was perceived by a few of nursing students. On the other hand, the minority of students had a negative image of nursing in military hospital & they said that it is like the servant's job. In this respect, El Gilany and Al Wehady (2001)⁽²¹⁾, found that nursing was perceived by nursing students in Saudi Arabia as a servant's job. These findings were similar to these of Snow Antle (1984)⁽²²⁾, Kaler et al (1989)⁽²³⁾, and Mansour (1992)⁽¹⁵⁾, who found that nurses were perceived by students and their parents to be much lower than physicians.

Concerning job promotion, the

majority of the sample has a positive image for working in military hospitals because job promotion, while, the minority has a negative image and this due to inability to continue their university studies in the faculty of nursing after finishing study in the military school.

Regarding working conditions, the present study revealed that the highest percentages among students were negatively influenced by working in night shift duty. It may be due to that working of the females during nights is not accepted in Egyptian Society, specially to those who live in the rural and countryside's. Also, working in the weekends and public holidays calling at any time to work, marking a lot of clerical work and the ways of punishment when mistake were done. The same result was reported by other study on governmental nursing school⁽²³⁾.

In this respect, Domrose (2002)⁽²⁴⁾,

and Losee (2004)⁽²⁵⁾, indicated that there are certain realities of nursing that make it hard work: the complexity of patient care and the need for coverage on nights, weekends, and holidays⁽¹⁹⁻²⁰⁾. While, (71.61%) of the student have a positive image toward working in the military hospitals because it has recent machines and more advanced medical sets.

The findings indicated that the majority of students at the military nursing school have a negative image toward military nursing. They mentioned that the afternoon and night shifts will not help them to enroll with any study, to share in social activities, to work in a private clinic to increase their income and to live in a stable life, with their husbands. Moreover they mentioned that working long hours affect on their house duties. McDonald and Doyle⁽²⁶⁾ declared that, the problems of women shift

workers are particularly difficult to resolve because the major burden of house hold work falls usually on them. Also, Stephen⁽²⁷⁾ mentioned that, most of shift workers find that late hours interfere with normal family and social life.

The majority of the sample viewed that the society has a positive image toward working in the military hospital because its privileges as treatment of the nurse and her family in the military hospitals, obtaining a flat and a car from the Army forces as well as, the financial reward are appropriate for choosing a carrier in military nursing. Contrary to this positive view Findings from the study also support previous research⁽⁶⁾ on how the media can influence individuals who might be considering nursing as a career.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of the present study revealed that the highest percentages of students had a positive image of military nursing

as a profession in Alex as well as, the other cities expect in Marsa Matrouh. Also, the military uniform. A good chance for chance for work with a good salary demonstrated a positive influence of the image of nursing as a profession among the highest percentage of students. Moreover, working in the afternoon & night shifts and on Fridays, and vacations, working with non nursing duties, calling the nurse at any time, the method had a negative influence on the image of nursing among the heights percentage of students.

In the light of the study finding, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. Nurse educators must provide a realistic and not a romantic view of nursing.
2. Persuading the media to present a more realistic and balanced portrayal of nursing could be a primary positive influence for the profession.
3. Providing more information to schools and presenting talks at schools by role models who reflect the diversity and complexity of the nurses' world.
4. Students in the preparatory schools in Mersa Matrouh city should know about the Military nursing school and causes of disenrollment of should be investigated and encountered
5. Correction of range as regard students after finishing the military school, they will become officers.
6. Military Hospital should investigate and modify working conditions for students to suit them and promote family friendly environments for students with greater flexibility in variable work shifts.
7. Use different methods of teaching

to open, up students perspectives of military nursing as a profession.

Table1: Students and their Parents Personal Characteristics.

| Personal data | No | % |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Age (yrs) : Mean ± S.D | 16 ± 1.627 | |
| Preparatory Grade: - Students who obtained more than 75 % in preparatory grades. - Students who obtained less than 75%in preparatory school. | 99 21 | 82.5 17.5 |
| Residency • Students from Tanta city • Students from Kafer El-Shikh city • Students from El-Baharah city • Students from El-Mansoura city • Students from Alexandria • Students from Marsa-Matrouh | 40 25 10 2 41 - | 33.3 20.8 8.3 1.6 34.1 - |
| Siblings < 3 ≥ 3 | 12 108 | 10.0 90.0 |
| Father's Education Bachelor Degree Technical Degree Primary education Illiterate | 9 11 42 58 | 7.5 9.2 35.0 48.3 |
| Mother's Education Bachelor Degree Technical Degree Primary education Illiterate | - 5 29 86 | - 4.2 24.1 71.7 |
| Father's Occupation Farmer Administrative Free job | 68 7 45 | 56.7 5.8 37.5 |
| Mother's Occupation Working Housewife | 12 108 | 10.0 90.0 |

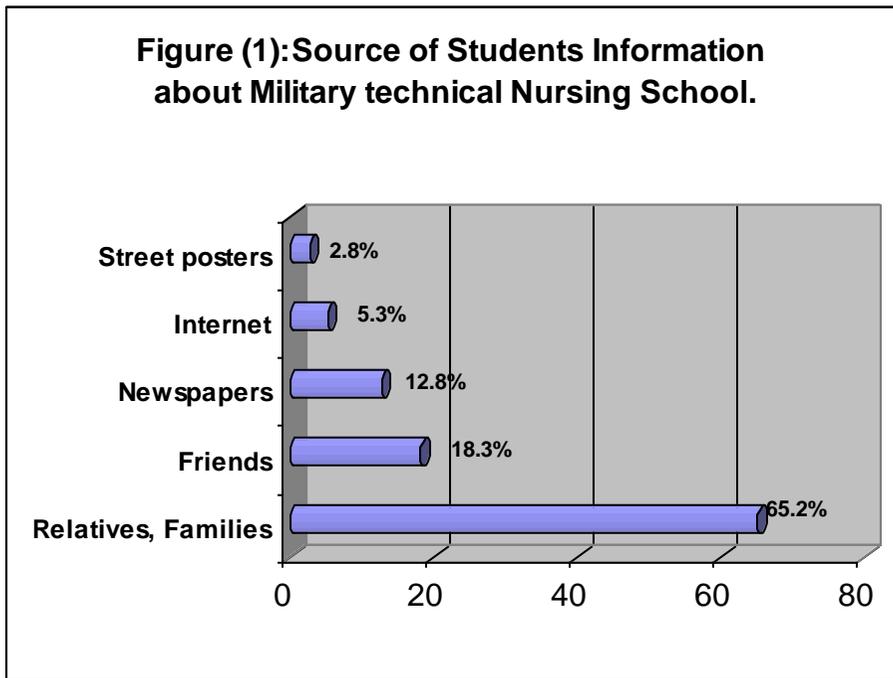


Table 2 : Reasons of enrolling to the Military Nursing School.

| Reasons | Agree | | Not sure | | Disagree | |
|---|-------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| | No | % | no | % | no | % |
| . Grades of the preparatory certificate. | 110 | 91.6 | 3 | 2.5 | 7 | 5.8 |
| . Admiring of becoming an officer after complete the nursing school . | 70 | 58.3 | 22 | 18.3 | 28 | 23.3 |
| . Believing of becoming an officer after graduation. | 80 | 66.6 | 22 | 18.3 | 18 | 15 |
| . Family decision . | 5 | 4.1 | 4 | 3.3 | 101 | 84.1 |
| . A good chance for a good job and income. | 102 | 85 | 10 | 8.3 | 8 | 6.6 |
| . I enroll with the school because the school is indoor. | 8 | 6.6 | 14 | 11.6 | 98 | 81.6 |

Table 3: Image of students toward military Nursing School.

| Image of military ng .concept | Agree | | Not sure | | Disagree | |
|--|-------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
| | No | % | no | % | no | % |
| - I Believe no difference between ng. in civilian or Military hospitals. | 51 | 42.5 | 24 | 20 | 45 | 37.5 |
| - Military hospitals have more advanced and more recent medical facilities | 86 | 71.6 | 23 | 19.1 | 11 | 9.2 |
| - Job promotion is present in military laws & someday I'll become an officer | 78 | 65% | 17 | 14.1 | 20.8 | 25.0 |
| - I didn't like to work in military hospitals because I am not a servant | 10 | 8.3 | 22 | 18.3 | 88 | 73.3 |
| - Nursing in military hospitals is based on disipline, accuracy, respect, creativity. | 91 | 75.8 | 14 | 11.6 | 10 | 12.5 |
| - I think I can't continue my studies in ng. faculty after finishing ng. military school | 18 | 15 | 12 | 10 | 90 | 75.0 |

$$\chi^2 = 4.76 , P < 0.05\%$$

Table 4: Causes of Negative Image Toward Working Conditions in Military Hospitals.

| Causes | Agree | | Uncertain | | Disagree | |
|--|-------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1.Afternoon and night shifts working | 86 | 71.6 | 17 | 14.1 | 17 | 14.1 |
| 2.Working on Fridays & Vacations . | 75 | 62.5 | 9 | 7.5 | 36 | 30 |
| 3. Calling the nurse at any time for working. | 75 | 62.5 | 19 | 15.8 | 26 | 21.6 |
| 4.Working with non nursing duties | 74 | 61.6 | 23 | 19.1 | 23 | 19.1 |
| 5.Exhusion From Standing and Hard work For a long time. | 68 | 56.5 | 22 | 18.3 | 25 | 30.0 |
| 6.Punishmet for mistakes with more shifts. | 92 | 76.6 | 9 | 7.5 | 19 | 15.8 |
| 7.Punishment for mistakes by staying for days in the hospital. | 94 | 7.3 | 6 | 5 | 20 | 16.6 |

$$\chi^2 = 8.237 , P = 0.859$$

Table 5: Image of effect of working in Military hospital on social significance.

| Social Significance | Agree | | Uncertain | | Disagree | |
|--|-------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1. Afternoon and night shifts affect badly on the society point of view toward nursing profession. | 62 | 51.6 | 28 | 29.3 | 30 | 25 |
| 2. The society point of view positively toward military nursing. | 84 | 70 | 14 | 11.6 | 22 | 18.3 |
| 3. Shifts affect badly on the Egyptian man desire to marry a nurse. | 20 | 18.6 | 25 | 20.8 | 75 | 62.5 |
| 4. Shifts affect negatively on the nurses house duties. | 100 | 83.3 | 12 | 10 | 8 | 6.6 |
| 5. Shifts didn't help the nurse to : | | | | | | |
| a. Enroll with any study she likes. | 20 | 14.6 | 14 | 11.6 | 86 | 61.6 |
| b. Share in social activities. | 9 | 7.5 | 22 | 18.3 | 89 | 74.1 |
| c. Work in private clinic. | 24 | 20 | 15 | 12.5 | 81 | 67.5 |
| d. Live in a stable life with the husband in the future. | 32 | 26.6 | 18 | 15 | 70 | 58.3 |

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