

Relations between Nursing Students' Caring Perception, Department Satisfaction, and Professional Self-concept

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: This study was conducted to identify the relationship among caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept in nursing students.

Methods/Statistical analysis: Data were collected from December 16 to 20, 2019 on 172 nursing students. For data analysis, IBM SPSS Statistics 23.0 program was used.

Findings: The relationship between the caring perception and department satisfaction ($r=.512, p<.001$), the caring perception and professional self-concept ($r=.335, p<.001$), the department satisfaction and professional self-concept ($r=.593, p<.001$) showed a statistically significant positive correlation.

Improvements/Applications: In conclusion, various interventions should be applied to improve nursing students' professional nursing competence.

Keywords: Caring, Perception, Satisfaction, Self-concept, Nursing

1. Introduction

The essence of nursing is the behavior of helping. Unless nurses understand the value of caring, it is hard to achieve therapeutic nursing. With the complex and fast changes of medical environments and people's change of perception of health, healthcare has changed from therapy based care to health improvement and maintenance. In this circumstance, the roles of nurses providing nursing service directly have been more important[1]. With these changes, nurses need to establish a good self-image as professionals to provide a nursing service, and to perceive the attributes of caring. Nursing students will play leading roles in nursing settings. Therefore, it is very important for them to perceive caring and to establish self-concept and value system as professionals.

Nursing is based on knowledge about professional caring. How nursing students perceive caring is dependent on the improvement in the method of teaching or learning the concept of caring in nursing science[2]. Nursing students' caring perception is a dynamic phenomenon that is changed over overall curriculums[3]. Accordingly, qualitative caring based on human dignity should be a key to nurses' jobs. Given that nursing students' caring perception had a significant and positive correlation with their professional self-concept[4], it is meaningful to look into the current level of nursing students' caring perception.

If students fail to be satisfied with their departments selected by themselves or others, they will feel more pressure for career and more stress for their major[5]. Students' department satisfaction is considered to be related to their adaptation to university. In a previous study, when nursing students were more satisfied with their department, they had more nursing professionalism[6]. Barron, West and Reeves[7] reported that nursing students' department dissatisfaction impedes the establishment of belief and attitudes necessary for efficient job performance and therefore disturbs their positive professionalism or self-concept. Accordingly, it is considered to be meaningful to analyze variables that are related to department satisfaction of nursing students who need to have positive professionalism as professionals.

Professional self-concept meaning the sense and view of jobs as professionals[8], an is of very importance in terms of the growth of nursing professionalism and qualitative nursing. Nurses need to have comprehensive and holistic knowledge of nursing, and to establish a firm view of nursing value and positive self-concept[9]. According to previous studies, self-esteem and self-efficacy moderate professional self-concept and increases major satisfaction[9]; professional self-concept is the largest influential factor on department satisfaction[10,11]. In the research on emergency medical technicians by Lee et al[4], professional self-concept had a significant correlation with caring perception. Even if nursing students' caring perception, department satisfaction, and

professional self-concept are relevant variables, there is almost no related research on nursing students. Nursing students prepare to become nurses. If they are satisfied with their department and establish positive professional self-concept and caring perception, it will be possible to solidify the value of nursing as professionals and to improve holistic nursing qualitatively.

2. Methods

2.1. Study design

This descriptive survey research is conducted to find correlations between nursing students' caring perception, department satisfaction, and professional self-concept.

2.2. Study subjects

The subjects are 172 second-year students going to department of nursing in university situated in W city. The number of samples accounted with G*Power 3.1.9 program was at least 166 in the conditions of the significance level .05, the power .95, and the effect size .15. In consideration of a dropout rate, a total of 175 questionnaire copies were distributed. Of them, three copies with double or insincere answers were excluded and 172 copies were used for data analysis.

2.3. Study tools

2.3.1. Caring perception

As the scale of caring perception, the scale of Song[12] was applied, consisting of 42 items. The higher the measured score is, the more a study subject has caring perception. In terms of Chronbach's α for reliability of the scale, the value was .94 in the research by Song[12], and was .89 in this study.

2.3.2. Department satisfaction

As for department satisfaction, the scale of Kim and Hah[13] was used, consisting of 27 items. The higher the measured score is, the more a study subject is satisfied with their department. In terms of Chronbach's α for reliability of the scale, the value was .92 in the research by Kim and Hah[13], and was .94 in this study.

2.3.3. Professional self-concept

As the measurement tool of professional self-concept, the scale of Song[12] was applied, consisting of 30 items. The higher the measured score is, the more a study subject has professional self-concept. In terms of Chronbach's α for reliability of the scale, the value was .94 in the research by Song[12], and was .93 in this study.

2.4. Data collection and ethics

Data had been collected for five days from Dec. 16 to 20, 2019. All the data and personal information collected for this study are based on the principle of anonymity, and is thoroughly confidential. Each subject's information was identified with nameless codes.

2.5. Data analysis method

For data analysis, IBM SPSS Statistics 23.0 program was used. The study subjects' general characteristics were analyzed with real number & percentage, and their caring perception, department satisfaction, and professional self-concept were analyzed with the mean and standard deviation. Differences in the study subjects' caring perception, department satisfaction, and professional self-concept depending on their general characteristics were analyzed in Independent t-test and ANOVA, and in Scheffe's test as a post test. Correlations between the study subjects' caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept were analyzed with Pearson correlation coefficients.

3. Study results

3.1. General characteristics of study subjects

The general characteristics of subjects are shown in table 1. Regarding gender, women accounted for 89.0%. The subjects who had two siblings accounted for 76.2%. The subjects, who wanted to be employed in medical institutions right after their graduation, accounted for 91.3%. With regard to subjective health state, 59.9% replied that they were healthy. Regarding academic performance, the subjects in the middle level accounted for 63.4%. The respondents who had good friendship accounted for 57.6%. Regarding personality, the subjects who were in between extrovert and introvert accounted for 52.9%.

Table 1: Characteristics of the subjects (N=172)

Characteristics	Categories	N (%)
Gender	Female	153 (89.0)
	Male	19 (11.0)
Number of sibling	Alone	15 (8.7)
	2	131 (76.2)
	≥3	26 (15.1)
First desired job	Medical institution	157 (91.3)
	Public officer	11 (6.4)
	Industry	4 (2.3)
Health status	Healthy	103 (59.9)
	Usually	50 (29.1)
	Not healthy	19 (11.0)
Academic grade	High	29 (16.9)
	Middle	109 (63.4)
	Low	34 (19.8)
Friendship	Good	99 (57.6)
	Usually	73 (42.4)
Personality	Extroverted	55 (32.0)
	Usually	91 (52.9)
	Introverted	26 (15.1)

3.2. The study subjects' caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept

The study subjects' caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept are shown in table 2. The mean value of the study subjects' caring perception was 3.96 ± 0.37 out of five full points. That of their department satisfaction was 3.75 ± 0.51 out of five full points. That of their professional self-concept was 3.14 ± 0.39 of four full points.

Table 2: Caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept in nursing students (N=172)

Variables	M±SD
Caring perception (1-5)	3.96 ± 0.37
Department satisfaction (1-5)	3.75 ± 0.51
Professional self-concept (1-4)	3.14 ± 0.39

3.3. The study subjects' caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept according to their general characteristics

Differences in the study subjects' caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept according to their general characteristics are presented in table 3.

<Insert table 3>

3.4. Correlations between the study subjects' caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept

Correlations between the study subjects' caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept are shown in table 4. As a result, their caring perception and department satisfaction had a positive correlation ($r=.512$, $p<.001$); their caring perception and professional self-concept had a positive correlation ($r=.335$, $p<.001$); their department satisfaction and professional self-concept had a positive correlation ($r=.593$, $p<.001$).

Table 4: Relationship of nursing students' caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept (N=172)

	Caring perception $r(p)$	Professional self-concept $r(p)$
Department satisfaction	.512 (.000)	.593 (.000)
Caring perception		.335 (.000)

4. Discussion

This study was conducted to provide a fundamental material to come up with a plan for improving their professional self-concept of nursing which can positively influence the roles to be played as medical staff.

In the study, the mean value of the subjects' caring perception was 3.96 out of five full points, which was above average. According to the study by Lee et al[4] who applied the same scale to emergency medical technicians, the score was 3.73 points, a little higher than the score drawn in this study. In a practical setting, nurses offer direct nursing in the closest distance from patients and much perceive caring, and nursing students understand and learn the meaning of caring through experiences and education in such a clinical practice setting. On contrary, it is considered that emergency medical technicians come across patients for a short time in an emergency situation and less experience caring than nurses. Nevertheless, this study had some limitations to the analysis on the point. Accordingly, nursing students who are a key to nursing need to do clinical practice of caring as an integrated area in hospital, to learn positive modeling of their senior nurses, and to improve their caring perception through a variety of caring experience programs and voluntary work.

The subjects of this study were second-year nursing students. The mean value of their department satisfaction was 3.75 out of five full points, which was a little above average and a little lower than the result (4.01) of the research with third and fourth year nursing students by Yang[10]. It is considered that a school year would influence the difference. The result of this study is supported by the result that the more nursing students were satisfied with clinical practice, the more they were satisfied with their major[14]. According to the study with ordinary university students by Yu et al[5], senior students were more satisfied with their department. Given the result, higher school year students, who somewhat understand their department and are more adapted to their department, have more department satisfaction. In addition, the largest influential factor on department satisfaction was found to be professional self-concept[11]. Given the result that the more study subjects had department satisfaction, the more they had occupational identity[14], the foundation for playing a role as professionals and doing the best for caring for patients should be nursing students' adaptation to university life first. In addition, it will be necessary to provide differentiated contents and continuous instructions in order to increase their major satisfaction according to curriculums.

In this study, the subjects' professional self-concept scored 3.14 out of four full points. In the research by Kim[9] who applied the same tool to nursing students, it scored 3.04 points, which was a little higher than the score (3.02) in the research by Yang[10]. These results mean that nursing students' professional self-concept remain above average. The scores of professional self-concept and department satisfaction were higher in the students who selected their department in consideration of aptitude and had good friendship and academic performance[11]. The largest influential factor on nursing students' clinical performance ability was professional self-concept[15]. Given these results, it is necessary to help students establish philosophy for nursing value and major from the time of entrance in school, and to develop and apply a variety of programs for improving department adjustment and major satisfaction and making professionalism.

In this study, correlations between nursing students' caring perception and department satisfaction, between their caring perception and professional self-concept, and between their department satisfaction and professional self-concept were positive. According to the studies with nursing students by Jeon[11] and by Hwang[16], professional self-concept and department satisfaction had a net correlation. The research with emergency medical technician students by Lee et al[4] revealed that caring perception and professional self-concept had a positive correlation. This result is consistent with the result of this study. Nurses' professional self-concept had a significant and positive correlation with their perception of caring attributes[17]. The more professional self-concept, the more department satisfaction[11]. These results actively support the result of this study. Offering qualitative caring, which should be the basis of nurses' jobs based on human dignity, requires department satisfaction first which will positively influence their belief and attitude for efficient performance of nursing roles as professionals. It is hard to make directive comparison since there is no research on correlations between caring perception and department satisfaction. In order for nursing students to improve their perception of caring which is the essence of nursing and to increase their major satisfaction and professional self-concept, it is necessary to develop and provide varied contents and to select students in consideration of aptitude for the department.

5. Conclusion

In order to improve nursing students' caring perception and increase their department satisfaction, it is necessary to provide a variety of programs and education management from the time of their entrance. This study is meaningful in the point that it confirmed the importance of caring as the essence of nursing and the necessity of professional self-concept as professionals. Since the study subjects are limited to second year nursing students in one university, it is hard to generalize the study results.

6. References

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Table 3: Caring perception, department satisfaction and professional self-concept in nursing students according to general characteristics (N=172)

Characteristics	Categories	Caring perception				Department satisfaction				Professional self-concept			
		M±SD	t/F	p	Scheffe'	M±SD	t/F	p	Scheffe'	M±SD	t/F	p	Scheffe'
Gender	Female	3.95±0.38	-2.056	.047		3.72±0.52	-1.882	.062		3.12±0.39	-2.499	.019	
	male	4.06±0.20				3.96±0.36				3.29±0.27			
Number of sibling	Alone	3.97±0.20	.013	.987		3.84±0.50	.340	.712		3.12±0.26	.221	.802	
	2	3.96±0.38				3.75±0.50				3.15±0.39			
	≥3	3.96±0.41				3.70±0.58				3.10±0.44			
First desired job	Medical institution ^a	3.98±0.37	1.976	.142		3.80±0.48	14.505	.000	b,c<a c<b	3.17±0.37	12.437	.000	c<a,b
	Public officer ^b	3.79±0.39				3.42±0.50				2.91±0.34			
	Industry ^c	3.75±0.10				2.63±0.09				2.35±0.13			
Health status	Healthy ^a	3.98±0.37	3.064	.049		3.89±0.42	11.552	.000	b,c<a	3.25±0.35	13.250	.000	b,c<a
	Usually ^b	3.87±0.29				3.54±0.55				3.02±0.33			
	Not healthy ^c	4.10±0.49				3.51±0.61				2.86±0.49			
Academic grade	High ^a	4.08±0.37	7.252	.001	c<a,b	3.93±0.55	4.807	.009	c<a	3.24±0.33	3.480	.033	c<a
	Middle ^b	3.99±0.35				3.76±0.46				3.15±0.37			
	Low ^c	3.76±0.35				3.55±0.57				3.00±0.45			
Friendship	Good	3.98±0.38	.855	.394		3.90±0.46	4.954	.000		3.23±0.37	3.961	.000	
	Usually	3.93±0.36				3.54±0.51				3.01±0.38			
Personality	Extroverted ^a	4.00±0.39	.852	.428		3.98±0.48	10.918	.000	b<a	3.31±0.37	9.326	.000	b<a
	Usually ^b	3.96±0.38				3.60±0.52				3.04±0.36			
	Introverted ^c	3.88±0.26				3.79±0.33				3.11±0.40			