Perception of registered nurses and nursing students about nursing profession

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Abstract
Introduction: Perception of profession means self recognition and it is the combination of different thoughts that person carry within, ideas, assumptions and expectations. Perception of nurses about nursing profession depicts that how nurses feel about themselves regarding professional proficiency. Positive perception about profession exerts a significant influence on professionals' prestige.
Objectives of the Study: To identify the perception of registered nurses having baccalaureate degree regarding nursing profession and identify the perception of baccalaureate nursing students regarding nursing profession.
Methods: Study design was Cross sectional analytical and non-probability sampling technique was used. Total sample size was 90 and there were 45 participants in each group i.e. students and registered nurses. Data was collected by using self administered questionnaire and analyzed on SPSS version 21.
Participants: Registered nurses and 3rd year, 4rth year nursing students of tertiary care hospital and colleges of Lahore Pakistan.
Results: Data analysis illustrated five main domains of perception. Nurses exhibited positive perception about reason to choose nursing, about professionalism and job autonomy. In area of self satisfaction and public image nurses were undecided. Students also held positive perception in all domains except job satisfaction about job where they were undecided.
Conclusion: This study concludes that overall perception of profession is positive among registered nurses and nursing students. The efforts should be made to improve the public image and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Perception, public image, autonomy, self satisfaction, professionalism

INTRODUCTION
Large portion of hospital staff consists of nurses. They directly communicate with patients and other health professionals while rendering health care services. Consequently, nurses influence the productivity and impression of organization, as well as the patient's gratification during period of treatment (Lee and Yang). Profession of nursing is present since the

time of the caveman and cavewomen used to treat the wounded, bandaged the sores of the injured. Florence Nightingale is a founder of modern nursing and she recognized nursing as a self-reliant profession that was not subordinate to the medical profession. For a long period of time nursing was conceived as integrated to the medical profession but not equivalent to it (Lee and Yang). . Nursing is an idea or notion that brings to mind several ideas and impression. These consist of white dress, nursing caps, needles and bedpans, while for others it includes courtesy, competence, sympathy and intellect. currently profession of nursing is attached only to hospital and community settings, and it is imperative that the nursing professionals and other health professionals who are working with nurses have a clear understanding of nursing profession that it has its own areas of expertise that are unique to its job, So it leads to the impression that nurses are professionals who can do their job without presence of the doctors. This all gives rise to make recognizable impression about the nursing profession (Belete, Lamaro et al. 2015) The impression of nursing is that how nurses view themselves and how does (the community) perceive nursing profession. Earlier studies have indicated that the public perception of nursing generally differs from nurses' own image of nursing. This societal opinion about nursing is based on misinterpretation and conventional image build up over the years and presently media has played a significant role in causing impairment of nurse's image in front of society. The media played a vital role in representing the stereotypical image of a nurse as a doctor's servant (Hoeve, Jansen et al. 2014. There is a lack of true understanding about nursing profession that this is noble, vibrant and dynamic profession, it provides chances to excel professionally and academically by pursuing master and doctoral degree. Community assumes that it is female

dominant profession but actually it is not true about nursing profession. another unrealistic view point of nursing is that it is limited to bedside care and drug administration instead of highly qualified skilled nursing professionals, they are playing their important role in hospitals and in educational institutes and policy making etc.(Cho SH1 2010 Fe).This improper image of nursing in Pakistan is affecting the status of those who join the profession and get to work in it (Gul 2008). David Maxfield 2005, reported in his research that few nurses show concern that the perception of nursing is impaired because other nurses do not practice nursing task according to the defined standard of nursing practice. Nurses feel downhearted when their practice are not appreciated by the colleagues and by the society and this cause feeling of worthless, demotivation and leaves the profession. To overcome this issue and to meet the demands of health care needs , there is an earnest need to promote the new nurses induction in nursing education programs and retaining nurses in the job by using efficient approaches to promote the positive public image of profession and removing the factors that negatively affect the status of nursing profession (Raisa B Gul | BScN June 2008).

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Study design: cross sectional analytical design.
Setting: The study was carried out at Institute of Nursing, University of Health Sciences, Lahore Pakistan, and data was collected from registered nurses working in different tertiary care hospitals and from student nurses of different colleges of Lahore Pakistan, these includes: Jinnah Hospital Lahore, Lahore General Hospital, Fatima Memorial Hospital Lahore, Punjab Institute of Cardiology Lahore, Sheikh Zayed Hospital Lahore, FMH College of Nursing Lahore, Allama Iqbal Medical

College Lahore, Sheikha Fatima College of Nursing Lahore, Punjab.
Subjects: 90 nurses 45 in each group.

INCLUSION CRITERIA: For registered nurses**:** Registered Nurses having baccalaureate degree working in tertiary care hospitals having experience minimum of three years. **For student nurses:** 3rd year and 4rth year nursing students in baccalaureate degree programme.
EXCLUSION CRITERIA: Nursing Educators and Head nurses. Nurses having higher degree like post basic diploma or MSc nursing degree. Nurses having working experience in foreign country.
Data Collection Tools:
Section-1: consists of socio demographic characteristics of participants including: Age, gender, marital status, academic grade, family size, rural/urban, religion year of work experience, desire of working abroad, designation, department or unit and qualification.
Section-2: Comprised of 39 questions about Perception of registered nurses and nursing students about nursing profession. Five points likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=agree and 5=Strongly Agree).
These domains are:-
A(Reason to Choose Nursing), **B** (Professional Autonomy), **C** (Self Satisfaction), **D**(Professionalism), **E** (Public Image).
The perception about nursing profession was arbitrarily divided into following categories based on the score in structured questionnaire.
Negative perception: <50%
Undecided or Neutral: 51% - 59%
Positive perception: 60 and more than 60%

Validity and reliability of data collection tools: In current study, internal consistency reliability of self structured questionnaire was tested through pilot study by applying Cronbach's alpha through SPSS IBM Version 20.it was calculated as with internal consistency of 0.949 for section 2 which indicated that instrument was reliable for data collection.
Pilot study: before embarking on the full study, self constructed questionnaire was pre tested pilot study was carried out on 16(18%) registered nurses and student nurses eight in each group to test the feasibility of study design impartiality and applicability of data collection tool. Participants were selected according to their voluntary consent on basis of non probability sampling technique. Selected participants were not included in actual study.
DATA COLLECTION METHOD
All the participants were included in the study according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data was collected from 90 participants working in different hospitals of Lahore. Informed consent was obtained and proper explanation was given to the participants. Confidentiality was ensured to protect the ethical rights of the participants. A detail of demographics profile was recorded. The data was collected by self-administered questionnaire. After the data collection it was entered to SPSS Software version IBM-21 for appropriate analysis.
Data analysis: the response rate was 100%.data was processed and analyzed through SPSS software version IBM 20. Descriptive statistics p value and percentages were used to describe the results.

RESULTS
Section one: figure1, table 1 and table 2 are about general traits (demographics) which include age, marital status, and family size of the participants.
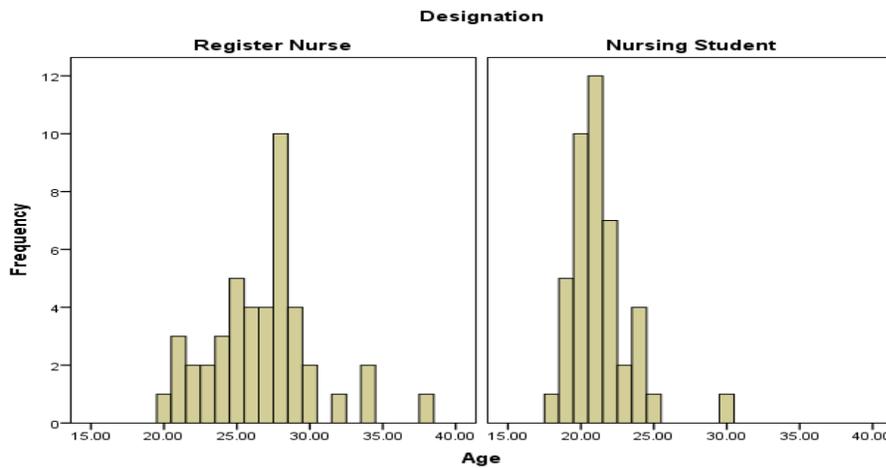
Figure-1: Age distribution of Nurses

Table-1: Marital Status in Study Groups

	Registered Nurse	*Nursing Student*	*Total*
Single	31(68.9%)	42(93.3%)	*73*
Married	14(31.1%)	3(6.7%)	*17*
Total	*45*	*45*	*90*

Table-2: Family Size in Study Groups

	Registered Nurse	*Nursing Student*	*Total*
1	10(22.2%)	11(24.4%)	21
2	32(71.1%)	28(62.2%)	60
3	2(4.4%)	5(11.1%)	7
4	1(2.2%)	1(2.2%)	2
Total	*45*	*45*	*90*

Section two: table 3 to table 7 are about perception of nurses about the following different domains: Reason to choose nursing (career choice), Professional autonomy, Job satisfaction, Professionalism, Public image.

Table-3: Comparison of domain "Reasons to Choose Nursing"

	"Reasons to Choose Nursing"		*Total*
	Registered Nurse	*Nursing Student*	
Negative Perception	7(15.6%)	8(17.8%)	*15*
Neutral	7(15.6%)	7(15.6%)	*14*
Positive Perception	31(68.9%)	30(66.7%)	*61*
Total	*45*	*45*	*90*

***Chi-Square Test*= 0.083, *p-value*=0.959**

No significant difference was seen among two study groups regarding reasons to choose nursing profession. Among registered nurses positive perception regarding reasons to choose was 68.9% and among nursing students it was 66.7% respectively.***Table-3***

Table-4: Comparison of domain "Professional Autonomy"

	Professional Autonomy		Total
	Registered Nurse	Nursing Student	
Negative Perception	4(8.9%)	9(20%)	13
Neutral	6(13.3%)	9(20%)	15
Positive Perception	35(77.8%)	27(60%)	62
Total	45	45	90

Chi-Square Test=3.555, *p-value*= 0.169

Positive perception regarding Professional autonomy was 77.8% among register nurses and 60% among nursing students. Although positive perception was higher among registered nursing but it was not statistically significant difference when compared with nursing students. *Table-4*

Table-5: Comparison of domain "Job-Satisfaction"

	Job-Satisfaction		Total
	Registered Nurse	Nursing Student	
Negative Perception	7(15.6%)	12(26.7%)	19
Neutral	9(20%)	9(20%)	18
Positive Perception	29(64.4%)	24(53.3%)	53
Total	45	45	90

Chi-Square Test= 1.787, *p-value*= 0.409

Job-satisfaction was lower in nursing students when compared with registered nurses. But still it did not show any statistically significant difference between the two groups. I.e. Registered nurses: 64.4% & Nursing students: 53.3%, p-value=0.409 *Table-5*

Table-6: Comparison of domain "Professionalism"

	Professionalism		Total
	Registered Nurse	Nursing Student	
Negative Perception	3(6.7%)	4(8.9%)	7
Neutral	0(0%)	3(6.7%)	3
Positive Perception	42(93.3%)	38(84.4%)	80
Total	45	45	90

Chi-Square Test=3.343, *p-value*= 0.188

Positive perception regarding professionalism among registered nurses and nursing students did not show any statistically significant difference. However positive perception was a bit higher among registered nurses as compared to nursing students. I.e. Nursing students: 84.4% & Register Nurses: 93.3%, p-value=0.188. *Table-6*

Table-7: Comparison of domain "Public Image"

	"Public Image"		Total
	Registered Nurse	Nursing Student	
Negative Perception	10(22.2%)	6(13.3%)	16
Neutral	9(20%)	8(17.8%)	17
Positive Perception	26(57.8%)	31(68.9%)	57
Total	45	45	90

Chi-Square Test= 1.497, *p-value*= 0.473

Positive perception regarding public image of registered nurses was lower as compared to nursing students. i.e. Register Nurses: 57.8% & Nursing Students: 68.9%, p-value=0.473. ***Table-7***

DISCUSSION

To assess the perception of nurses about profession, different domains of the particular profession were incorporated in current study such as, reason for choosing a career, professional autonomy, self satisfaction/job satisfaction, professionalism, and public image. The study presented that overall perception of nurses about nursing profession is positive. Concerning the perception of nurses about "reason to choose nursing as a career", among registered nurses majority has positive perception and they scored, (68.9%) and student nurses scored (66.7%) respectively. One reason of positive perception in nurses and students may be due to the evolution of this profession in the last two decades, with greater chances for excelling in profession, economic benefits, and better employment opportunities as compared to other professions due to shortage of nurses in Pakistan. Findings of this study were similar to study conducted by Devi and Devi, 2015 and (Lai, Peng et al. 2006), (Patidar, Kaur et al. 2011) it was found that (72.5%) students rated nursing as a career of first choice, and they joined nursing profession by their own choice.

Taking into account perception of registered nurses about their professional autonomy, it was found that a registered nurse had positive perception regarding Professional autonomy and they scored (77.8%) In present study perception of autonomy among nursing students was positive who scored (60%) Table:4. . Registered nurses have more positive perception as compared to student nurses. This positive perception about autonomy may be due to, that this study is done on the participants having baccalaureate degree, their level of knowledge is good, they have better decision making power, good critical thinking, and better acknowledgement at workplace as compared to diploma nurses, they have good communication. A survey carried out by (Valizadeh, Zamanzadeh et al. 2013), (Motamed-Jahromi, Jalali et al. 2015) similar results were found that nurses had positive perception about autonomy. Nurses working in operating rooms or critical care units, display a higher level of professional independence.

During analysis of perception regarding self satisfaction/ job satisfaction, registered nurses have positive perception and scored,(64.4%). The reason of good perception of registered nurses about job satisfaction may be that, they got job immediately after completion of degree as compared to their peers, nursing is multidimensional job and creates good feeling among nurses, they can continue their advance studies along with their job because of availability of shift duties, job security. These findings were in compliance with (Helbing 2017) who reported that participants were satisfied with their work. on the other hand nursing student's perception regarding self satisfaction they scored, (53.3%) Table: 5, and remained undecided whether they are satisfied or not, it may be due to that they are not working properly in the field and their role is guided by their clinical supervisors and teachers, therefore they are unclear about satisfaction,

In relation to the domain of professionalism, registered nurses scored.93.3% and student nurses scored, (84.4%) Table: 6, and have positive perception about professionalism in nursing. In last decade nursing education undergo great evolution in Pakistan, consequently nurses are highly motivated to

engage in continue education and self-regulation in order to keep abreast their knowledge and practices as well as profited by opportunities with in organizations. Similar to the present study, (Fantahun, Demessie et al. 2014) reported in their research that nurses had positive perception about professionalism in nursing.

While considering registered nurse's conception about public image, it was noted that registered nurses remained undecided (57.8%) Table: 7. In present study registered nurses are ambiguous about the public image of nurses because of the misconceptions, those are portrayed on media like, and nursing is introduced as a non specialized activity. Some people see a nurse as a female who provides care for the patients, not as an independent health care provider. A study carried out by (Karanikola, Papathanassoglou et al. 2011) showed that nurses had negative perception of their public image and that was strong factor for leaving the profession.

This study concludes that registered nurses and nursing students have positive perception about nursing profession. This study also concludes that in some areas like, job satisfaction the students remained undecided because of their apprenticeship role, guided by their clinical supervisors and teachers; therefore they are unclear about job satisfaction. This study also concludes that registered nurses are undecided about public image of their profession. The dynamics of this profession are long neglected and damaging.

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