

PEDIATRIC NURSING STUDENTS' STATUS OF LIKING OF CHILDREN AND AFFECTING FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

The study was a quasi-experimental design with the objective to determine the status of liking of children of pediatric nursing students. 172 students who were attending the 2015-2016 school year and taking pediatric nursing course in Akdeniz University, Faculty of Nursing participated in the research. Data were collected by the "Personal Information Form" and the "Barnett Status of Liking of Children Scale". It was determined that the average age of the students were 20.93 ± 0.90 , 73.3% of them were women. It was seen that there is increase between the pretest points (min=27, max=98, av= 74.77 ± 14.17) and the posttest points (min=40, max=98, av= 80.40 ± 13.01) which the students took from the status of liking of children scale, but this increase was not statistically meaningful ($p < 0.05$). It is highly important for pediatric nurses to understand the physical, intellectual, emotional and social developmental differences of children and to exhibit the necessary love and attention to them.

Keywords: Pediatric nursing, nursing student, status of liking of children.

INTRODUCTION

Love is the sum of all positive and benevolent feelings that bind people together and it is a vital component of a child's life from the very first moments of birth (Bektaş et al., 2015). As United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child puts it, all children, "for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding" (Hockenberry & Wilson, 2015). Hospitalization, on the other hand, dramatically interferes with the accomplishment of such a process. Children regard hospitalization as a punishment and they may feel that they are less loved and cared. Therefore, they need be embraced with utmost attention and love by health professionals, particularly pediatric nurses, during their treatment and hospitalization. One's attitudes towards children is a fundamental indicator of their commitment and care for children (Barnett & Sinsi 1990). The first and foremost criterion of becoming a pediatric nurse is to love children (Hockenberry & Wilson, 2015; Happell 2000).

Nursing education is based on scientific practice that provides students with basic nursing skills, professional codes, and professional values from diverse cultures (Chen, 2009). Becoming a pediatric nurse begins with loving children (Happell 2000). As Happell (2000) quotes, Stevens and Dulhunty (1992) explains that an incentive to work with children and a positive attitude towards children encourage nurses to choose pediatric nursing as a career choice. Pediatric nurses are also responsible for protecting the rights of children and their parents (Hockenberry & Wilson, 2015; Mandelco & Potts, 2012). Thus, pediatric nurses are required to treat children with love and care in order to appreciate physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and developmental differences between children and to stand for their rights (Hockenberry & Wilson, 2015).

Nursing profession, especially pediatric nursing, heavily relies on communication, empathy and liking of children (Çavuşoğlu 2013). It was reported in a study conducted with nurses that nurses with lower scores of liking of children had communication problems with their patients more frequently (Tural et al., 2010). Happell (2000) similarly found that pediatric nursing was considered as a challenge by senior nurses while it remained a popular career choice for nursing students. Besides, it has also been shown that one's attitudes towards children are determined by certain sociodemographic characteristics such as age and sex as well as their own childhood experiences or experiences with children (Erdem & Duyan 2011; Bektaş et al., 2015).

Despite the fact that nurses' attitudes towards the liking of children have been recently investigated in a limited number of studies (Erdem & Duyan 2011; Akgün & Kostak 2013; Bektaş et al., 2015), the focus has seemingly been placed on the attitudes of teachers (Gelbal & Duyan 2010; Yazıcı 2013; Kabaklı Çimen 2015). This study, therefore, aims to analyze the effects of Pediatric Nursing courses on third year nursing students' attitudes towards the liking of children and related variables.

METHOD

The Study Type

The study was a quasi-experimental design with the objective to determine the status of liking of children of pediatric nursing students.

Study Universe and Sample

The study universe included 236 third year nursing students attending The Faculty of Nursing at Akdeniz University in 2015-2016 academic year and the study sample was composed of 172 voluntary students.

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected by the "Personal Information Form" and the "Barnett Status of Liking of Children Scale".

Personal Information Form

The personal information form consisted of 7 questions inquiring the sociodemographic characteristics and the status of liking of children of student nurses.

The Barnett Status of Liking of Children Scale

The Barnett Status of Liking of Children Scale was developed by Barnett and Sinisi with the purpose of measuring one's attitudes towards children and it was a 7 likert scale with 14 items (Barnett & Sinisi 1990). The scale was scored as 1=Totally Disagree and 7=Totally Agree. The total score varies between 14-98 and 14-38 scores indicate low, 39-74 scores moderate and 75-98 scores high levels of liking of children. Higher scores suggest higher levels of liking of children. Several items in the scale like 3rd item, 6th item, 10th item and 13th item, were reverse-scored. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Duyan and Gelbal (Duyan & Gelbal 2008). Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to be 0.92 and test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.85.

Collecting Data

The data derived from this quasi-experimental study were collected between February 2016 (pretest) and May 2016 (posttest). 172 students were included in the study without using a sampling method provided that they were third year students, enrolled in Pediatric Nursing course, and consented to participate in the study. Before delivering the data collection form, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and confidentiality of the data. They were, then, asked for their consent in writing to participate in the study. Additionally, the researchers sought the official permissions from the institution. The participant students filled in the forms within approximately 10-15 minutes.

Data Analysis

The study data were inserted into a database and analyzed with SPSS 20.0. The demographic characteristics of student nurses and their were analyzed with a variety of test including percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation and t test. The significance level was noted to be 0.05 for the data analysis.

FINDINGS

It was reported that the average age of student nurses was 20.93 ± 0.90 and 73.3% of the participants were female. It was further stated that 77.9% of the participants had nuclear families, and that they liked reading children's books (42.4%) and watching cartoons (82.6%). The study results also indicated that 83.1% of the students in the study were planning to have children in future and 58.1% of them wanted to become a pediatric nurse. It was finally demonstrated that 47.7% of these students were staying in a dormitory (Table 1).

Table 1: Descriptive Characteristics of Nursing Students (n=172)

Descriptive Characteristics	n	%
Sex		
Female	126	73.3
Male	46	26.7
Age		
20-21 years old	133	77.4
22-23 years old	37	21.5
24 and older	2	1.1
Family Structure		
Nuclear	134	77.9
Large	33	19.2
Separated or Single Parent	5	2.9
Reading Children's Books		
Yes	73	42.4
No	99	57.6
Watching Cartoons		
Yes	142	82.6
No	30	17.4
Planning to Become a Pediatric Nurse		
Yes	100	58.1
No	72	41.9
Planning to Have Children in Future		
Yes	144	83.1
No	28	16.9
Current Residence		
Family	40	23.3
Dormitory	82	47.7

Friends or Alone	50	29
Parental Attitude		
Democratic	119	69.5
Authoritarian, extremely disciplined	13	7.5
Flexible (Irregular)	11	6.3
Over protective	16	9.2
Inconsistent	13	7.5

*p < 0.05

Table 2: A Comparison between Liking of Children Scores of Nursing Students (n=172)

	Pretest			Posttest			t	P
	X±SD	Min.	Max	X±SD	Min.	Max		
Liking of Children Score	74.77±14.17	27.00	98.00	80.40±13.01	40.00	98.00	.139	.078

*p < 0.05

It was reported that the pretest score was 74.77±14.17 while the posttest score increased to 80.40±13.01. The difference between mean scores was found to be significant in accordance with the sex variable (Table 3).

Table 3: A Comparison Between Mean Scores in regard to the sex variable (n=172)

Sex	Liking of Children Score	X±SD	t	P
Female	Pretest	76.17±13.62	2.156	0.33*
	Posttest	70.96±15.09		
Male	Pretest	80.48±12.31		
	Posttest	80.20±14.81		

*p < 0.05

The study results suggested a significant correlation between liking of children and several variables such as sex, Family Structure, reading children's books, watching cartoons, and planning to become a pediatric nurse (Table 4).

Table 4: The Correlation between Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Liking of Children Score	1.000					
Sex	0.025*	1.000				
Family Structure	0.032*	0.605	1.000			
reading children's books	0.024*	0.856	0.006*	1.000		
watching cartoons	0.038*	0.170	0.001*	0.001*	1.000	
planning to become a pediatric nurse	0.078*	0.129	0.002*	0.000*	0.768	1.000

*p < 0.05

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

A prerequisite of becoming a pediatric nurse is to love children. It was already reported that student nurses who loved children and working with them would choose pediatric nursing as a career choice in their later lives (Happell 2000). This study aimed to study the effects of Pediatric Nursing course on third year student nurses' status of liking of children and related variables. It was consequently noted that the course positively influenced students. It was further stated that the pretest mean and posttest score were, which similarly suggested no statistically significant difference. Mutlu and Balci

also reported that the mean scores of liking of children were 77.68 ± 15.61 before internship and 80.95 ± 14.04 after internship, which indicated a statistical difference and a positive change in the attitudes of nursing students towards children.

It was also illustrated that the mean scores of students significantly differed in regard to the sex variable. It was pointed out that female students had higher scores of liking of children in comparison to male students, which complied with the results of similar studies (Barnett & Sinisi 2008; Akgün Kostak 2013). It was presumed that male students had lower scores because child rearing was a woman's responsibility in Turkish culture and child rearing roles were often associated with women. The study results further illustrated that student nurses from nuclear families had higher scores of liking of children in comparison to students from single parent families and large families. Büyük et. al. (2014) reported no significant correlation between the mean scores of liking of children and family characteristics of nurses. Parental relations, to a great extent, are shaped with parental attitudes towards children.

It was additionally emphasized that student nurses who liked reading children's books and watching cartoons had higher scores of liking of children. Gelbal and Duyan (2010) found that teachers who were reading children's books, playing children's games, and following news about children had better scores of liking of children. Uğurlu (2013) reported that teachers had more positive attitudes towards children when they read children's books and magazines. It was concluded that student nurses who were reading children's books were more likely to understand and discover a child's world. In other words, student nurses who read children's books can more easily empathize with children and anticipate their reactions. The levels of liking of children will certainly be improved by introducing child games to student nurses and pediatric nurses, encouraging them to play with children and to read children's books.

The study results also suggested that those who were planning to become a pediatric nurse in future had higher scores of liking of children. It was confirmed by a variety of studies illustrating that liking of children was the most vital variable in choosing a teaching career, and that students who liked spending time with children would work with children in their future careers (Happell 2000; Duyan & Gelbal 2008). A promising increase has recently been reported in the number of student nurses who are planning to become pediatric nurses.

Conclusion

In light of the study results, it was concluded that student nurses who participated in the study had higher status of liking of children, which was only slightly influenced by Pediatric Nursing course provided in the department but rather it was affected by a number of variables such as sex, family structure, reading children's books, watching cartoons, and planning to become a pediatric nurse in future. As a result, it is considered to be of utmost importance to provide professional guidance to nursing students who are planning to choose pediatric nursing as a career choice as well as taking their status of liking of children and related variables into serious consideration.

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