

## Perception of Secondary School Students Regarding Career Choices who enrolled in Faculty of Nursing

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### Abstract

**Background:** Enhancing secondary school students is important and attracts a role in the future nursing generation.

**Aim of the study:** To assess the perception of secondary school students regarding career choices who enrolled in the faculty of nursing. **Research design:** A descriptive correlational research design. **Sample:** a convenient sample (All available) of Secondary School students enrolled in the first-year faculty of nursing with total numbered 455 students during data collection periods. **Setting:** this study conducted in the faculty of nursing, Minia University.

**Data collection tool:** Perceptions of a professional nursing and career choices questionnaire was used. **Results:** nearly one-third said the main reason for enrollment is the desire to help, and the majority of them have a proud feeling about nursing as a Profession. Most of the studied students had a positive perception of the nursing profession, while the minority had a negative perception. **Conclusion:** Most Secondary School Students who enrolled in the faculty of nursing had positive career choices and no relation between demographic characteristics of the studied students with perception and demographic characteristics except the feeling of nurses student about nursing as a professional **Recommendations:** investigate secondary students' perspectives in a different region of Egypt and recruiting needs to design in light of evidence that family members' perception of nursing impact the professional decision-making of teenagers.

**Keywords:** Career Choices, Secondary school students & Perception.

### Introduction:

Secondary school students' interest in nursing has mostly been motivated by a transition in nursing's public view. In the past few decades, the public's perception of nursing has dramatically shifted. Many positive outcomes can be achieved when the profession has an unfavorable image, such as lower quality and lower numbers of nurses. For the image of the nursing profession to be changed, it is necessary to understand its role as a white army that promotes and provides nursing care services to covid-19 patients and recently (Jo et al., (2019) & Jisook, 2021). A nurse's perception of their career choice may be influenced by their decision to begin nursing, stay in nursing, advance in nursing, or pursue a nursing education and training (Emeghebo, 2012 & Rayan et al., 2019).

Changing the roles of nurses has contributed to the development of a positive career choice, and we must consciously work to maintain this image in order to encourage more males to choose nursing as a career option, just as any other profession, in order to achieve gender balance and to promote better professional and healthcare lobbying on behalf of patients and their families (Usher et al. 2014).

Nursing professionals must endeavor to develop and maintain a favorable image of themselves in order to

keep them motivated to work and remain in their field of choice. When it comes to promoting the nursing profession, nurses should act as role models and mentors wherever they go, whether in their personal lives or at their places of employment. As a result, the perception of nursing as a profession is influenced by various factors that influence the decision to pursue a nursing career. The following are some examples of these elements: The media, public perception, social position, nurses themselves, having a family member, cousin, or friend who is a nurse, role models, and financial means are all important considerations. (Abdel El-Halem et al., 2011). Recently, secondary school students were the greatest flow rate of entering the nursing profession as so the researcher conducted this study to assess the students' perception of the career choice of the nursing profession.

### Significance of the study

A crucial influence on the decision of adolescents to pursue a career in the nursing profession is the public view of nurses. It is critical to understand nursing students' perspectives of their job because it will assist them in spotting misconceptions and in planning public explanations about their careers (Oyedele et al., 2015).

Regarding the definition of perception **Oxford dictionary (2013)** defines it as the way something is understood, regarded, or interpreted by a group of people. According to popular perception, nursing is viewed as a more suitable job for secondary school students (**Bartfay et al., 2010**).

Historically, nursing has been linked with low social respect, difficulty attracting young people due to low earnings, severe workloads, limited career options, and a lack of opportunities for advancement. Second-year high school students' impressions of nursing are now more strongly linked to their drive to work, sense of identity, confidence, and sense of belonging in their profession (**National Students' Nurses Association, 2010**).

#### **Aim of the study**

This study aimed to assess the perception of secondary school students regarding career choices who enrolled in faculty of nursing

#### **Research questions:**

**Q1:** What is the perception of the secondary school students regarding career choices who enrolled in faculty of nursing?

**Q2:** Is there a relationship between the perception of secondary school students regarding career choices who enrolled in faculty of nursing and their demographic characteristics?

### **Subjects and Method**

#### **Research design:**

A descriptive research design was used to achieve the study aim.

#### **Setting:**

The study was conducted at the faculty of nursing at Minia University. Faculty of nursing provides different teaching and learning of their students in the various department as medical, surgical, physiology, microbiology, biochemistry.....etc. Moreover, it provides students activity, practical sessions, and community health care services.

#### **Subjects:**

A convenient sample was used in the current study, consisting of all available secondary students enrolled in the first year in the faculty of Nursing during the data collection period. Their total number was 455 students.

#### **Data Collection Tool:**

**Data were collected by using one tool as follows:**

**Self-administration questionnaire was used which includes four parts**

**The first part:** Socio-demographic data of the studied students as age, gender, residence, presence of a nurse friend or relative, family's reaction to students' enrollment, reasons for enrollment to the faculty of nursing, and feeling about nursing as a profession.

**The second part:** Perceptions of Professional Nursing questionnaire is a self-administered questionnaire developed by **Al-Jarrah, (2013) & Achilles (2010)**, adapted by the researchers based on a review of the related literature (**AbdelEl-Halem et al., 2011, Chauke, 2014, & Safadi et al. 2011**) to investigate an overview about the nursing profession among nursing students consisted of 22 items.

**Scoring system:** five Likert scale was used (from 1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree). The total score ranged from 22 to 110;  $22 \leq 66$  indicated a negative perception, and  $67 \leq 110$  indicated a positive perception.

**The third part:** Male nursing students' perceived problems scale was designed to assess male nursing students' perception of the perceived problems by a five Likert scale (from 1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree).

**The four part:** the social rank of healthcare-related jobs (one question)

#### **Validity and reliability of the tool**

The tools were tested by a team of five nursing administration experts at Minia University, which affirmed its validity. The tools were modified based on the panel's evaluation of the content's appropriateness and item sequence accuracy. Cronbach's alpha test was used to determine the degree to which the items of the tools was 0.795, 0.773 respectively.

#### **Pilot study:**

After developing the tools and before beginning the initial data collection, 45 (10%) secondary school students participated in a pilot study. The pilot study aimed to test whether the study was feasible, as well as the order in which the items were presented and the preliminary tool's consistency and applicability. It was also used to measure the questionnaire's period, which was 20 minutes, and was included with the key research participants. The process of the pilot study took two weeks (from 15/8 to 30/8) in August 2021

#### **Ethical considerations:**

Written approval was taken from the ethical committee in the Faculty of Nursing, Minia University. The study was approved by the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing at Minia University, who also served as the principal investigator. Obtaining oral agreement from secondary school students who were willing to engage in the study after being informed of the nature and goal of the research was required prior to starting either a pilot or the main study.

Secondary School Students have the right to decline to participate or withdraw from the study without providing a reason. During the data collection process, the privacy of the investigated secondary school students was taken into consideration. Everyone who took part was promised that all of their

information was kept strictly confidential; anonymity was also ensured by assigning a number to each nurse rather than their names in order to preserve their privacy.

#### Data collection procedure:

At Minia University, the official approvals were obtained from the dean of the faculty of nursing, which approved the documents. An official letter from the vice dean of postgraduate studies and research at Minia University's Faculty of Nursing, as well as approval from the ethical committee, were issued prior to the data collection and sent to the heads of the units in order to obtain their permission and assistance in conducting the study. The letters also included a list of the information required for the study. In addition, each participant gave verbal agreement before participating in the study. The aim, methodology, and anticipated advantages of this study were discussed with the nurses before they were allowed to participate in it. The researchers advised

the participants that participation is entirely voluntary and that they have the freedom to withdraw for any reason.

After that, the researchers visited each respondent's classroom and handed the data collection tools to them one by one (self-administration). The time required to complete the questionnaire sheet was around 20 minutes. Following the completion of the form by the participant, the researchers verified that the form was complete. From September to October 2021, data collection took place four days a week during morning and afternoon sessions.

#### Statistical design:

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (IBM 28.0) was used for the statistical analysis coding, and data entry was subjected to quality control tests. A quantitative variable was displayed using the mean and standard deviation (SD) as well as frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables.

#### Results:

**Table (1): Percentage distribution of the studied students according to their demographic characteristics (n = 455).**

Items	No.	%
<b>Age / year</b>		
17 -	97	21.3
18 -	223	<b>49.0</b>
19 -	89	19.6
20	46	10.1
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	254	<b>55.8</b>
Female	201	44.2
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	168	36.9
Rural	287	<b>63.1</b>
<b>Presence of a nurse friend</b>		
Yes	341	<b>74.9</b>
No	114	25.1
<b>Family's reaction to students' enrollment</b>		
One	109	25.1
Two	341	<b>74.9</b>
<b>Reasons for enrollment</b>		
Desire to help others	147	<b>32.3</b>
Challenges/rewarding career	79	17.4
Variety of career opportunities	53	11.6
Advice from relatives and friends	91	20.0
Others	85	18.7
<b>Feelings of nurse Students about Nursing as a Profession</b>		
Proud	379	<b>82.6</b>
Shy	11	2.4
Defensive	14	3.1
Attack on the nursing Profession	20	4.4
Change topic (divert attention)	34	7.5

Table (2): Mean scores of the studied students related to their perception of the nursing profession (n = 455).

ITEMS	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
<b>Perception to a description of the profession</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20.60</b>	<b>2.263</b>
1. Respectable Profession	2	5	3.66	0.619
2. Job and not a profession	1	4	3.21	0.924
3. A women's profession	1	5	3.45	0.789
4. Similar to the work of servants	1	5	3.80	1.202
5. A humanitarian profession	1	4	3.03	1.047
6. Profession based on ethical standards besides healthcare	1	5	3.45	0.734
<b>Perception to society's view</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14.58</b>	<b>1.872</b>
7. Well appreciated profession in the society	2	5	3.53	0.698
8. An extremely hard profession without enough appreciation in the society	2	5	4.04	0.963
9. An essential profession in any society	1	5	3.24	0.936
10. Useless profession & can be ignored in the society	1	5	3.77	1.197
<b>Students' perception of benefits of the nursing profession</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>28.25</b>	<b>3.050</b>
11. An independent profession that which nurses can make decisions by themselves.	2	4	3.45	0.740
12. Provides self-realization	1	5	3.57	0.685
13. It Gives a chance to be self-autonomies at work.	1	4	3.03	1.048
14. Nurses should obey doctors' orders without question.	2	5	4.03	0.967
15. Nurses waste a lot of time being busy but doing nothing	2	5	3.56	1.033
16. Provides an opportunity for personality development.	1	4	3.11	1.009
17. Important in patient's recovery & health promotion	2	4	3.45	0.752
18. There is no cooperation in this profession	2	5	4.04	0.963
<b>Students' perception of self-satisfaction in nursing</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13.55</b>	<b>2.352</b>
19. A dangerous profession	1	5	3.84	1.173
20. Anyone could be a nurse easily	1	5	3.05	1.105
21. I would like my child to become a nurse	2	5	3.21	1.058
22. I feel proud to be a nurse	2	5	3.45	0.755

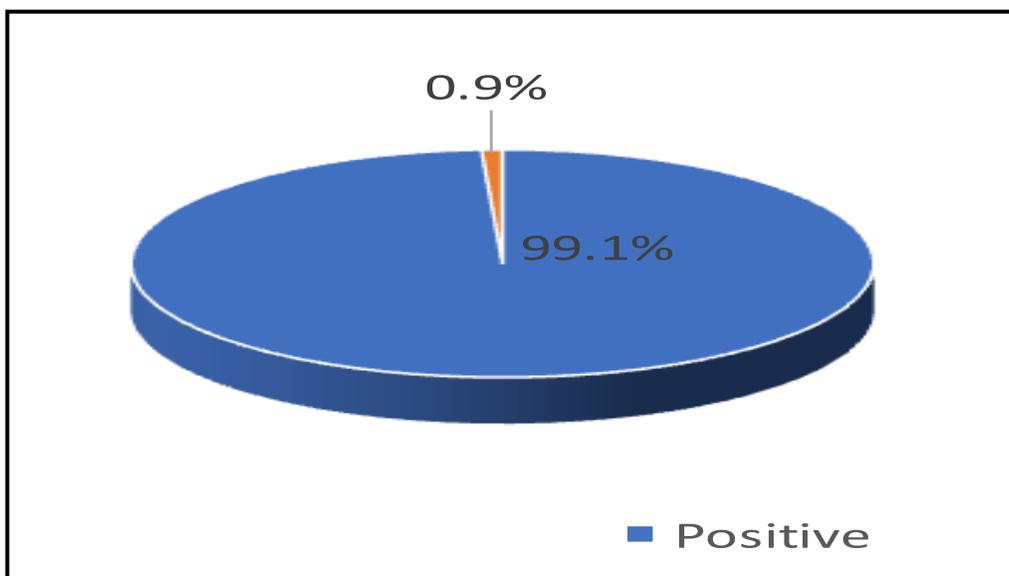
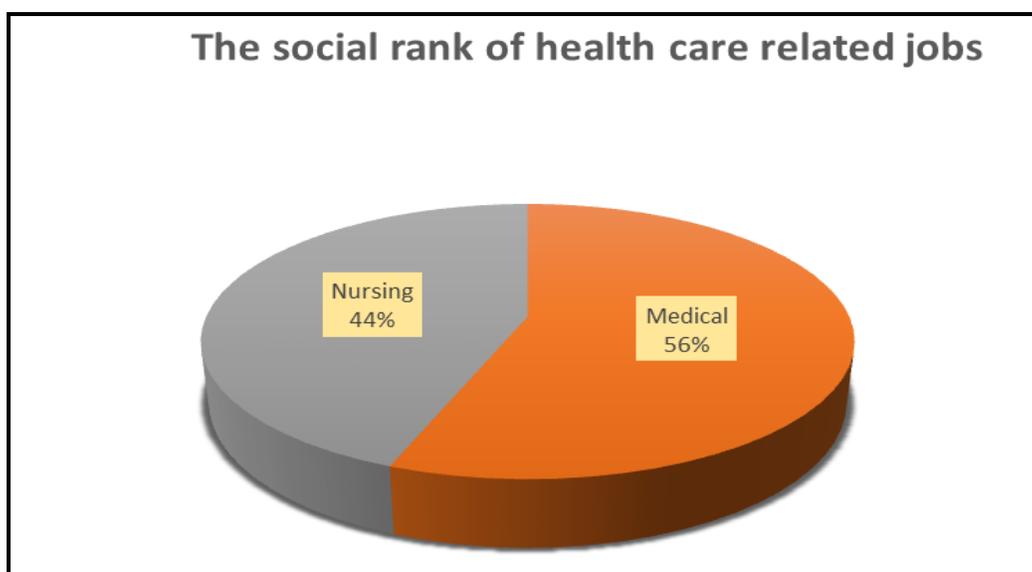


Figure (1): Distribution of the studied students regarding their total perception regarding career choices (n= 455).

**Table (3): Percentage distribution of Male nursing students' perceived problems (n = 254)**

Male nursing students' perceived problems	Completely disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.Bad societal image for a male nurse.	143	31.4	93	20.4	122	26.8	97	<b>21.4</b>
2.No cooperation of medical staff	103	22.6	70	15.4	135	29.7	147	<b>32.3</b>
3.Patients' & their relatives refuse male nursing care	127	27.9	98	21.5	183	40.3	47	10.3
4.Some obstetric nursing practices	137	30.1	109	24.0	128	28.1	81	17.8
5.Embarrassment while explaining a sensitive topic with the female patient	119	26.2	83	18.2	182	40.0	71	15.6
6.Refusal of male nurses' presence in female wards	147	32.3	97	21.4	163	35.8	48	10.5
7.I have no specific job title to be called	128	28.1	115	25.3	122	26.8	90	<b>19.8</b>



**Figure (2): Distribution of the social rank of healthcare-related jobs among the studied students (n= 455).**

**Table (4): Relation between demographic characteristics of the studied students with perception of the nursing profession (n = 455).**

Items	No.	Perception
<b>Age / year</b>		
17 -	97	78.1 ± 6.2
18 -	223	78.8 ± 5.6
19 -	89	78.6 ± 5.5
20	46	77.0 ± 5.7
<b>F (P-value )</b>		1.417 (0.237)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	254	78.6 ± 5.9
Female	201	78.3 ± 5.5
<b>t (P-value )</b>		0.558 (0.289)
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	168	78.1 ± 5.5
Rural	287	78.7 ± 5.9
<b>t (P-value )</b>		1.00 (0.159)

Items	No.	Perception
<b>Presence of a nurse friend</b>		
Yes	341	78.2 ± 5.7
No	114	79.1 ± 5.6
<b>t (P-value )</b>		1.380 (0.084)
<b>Reasons for enrollment</b>		
Desire to help others	147	78.5 ± 5.9
Challenges/rewarding career	79	79.0 ± 5.7
Variety of career opportunities	53	77.9 ± 5.8
Advice from relatives and friends	91	78.7 ± 5.8
Others	85	78.0 ± 5.2
<b>F (P-value )</b>		0.641 (0.634)
<b>Feelings of nurse Students about Nursing as a Profession</b>		
Proud	379	78.6 ± 5.6
Shy	11	74.6 ± 5.2
Defensive	14	78.7 ± 5.2
Attack on the nursing Profession	20	75.3 ± 5.3
Change topic (divert attention)	34	78.7 ± 6.3
<b>F (P-value )</b>		2.445 (0.018)*

**Table (1):** Shows that 49.0% of the studied students ages 18 years, 55.8% are male, and 63.1% lives in rural areas. 74.9% & 32.3% mentions the presence of a nurse friend, the main reason for enrollment is the desire to help respectively, and 82.6% have a proud feeling about nursing as a Profession

**Table (2):** Presents mean scores perception of the studied students related description of the profession is  $20.6 \pm 2.263$  from 30, perception of society's view is  $14.58 \pm 1.872$  from 20, Students' Perception related benefits of the nursing profession is  $28.25 \pm 3.050$  from 40 and students' perception to self-satisfaction in nursing is  $13.55 \pm 2.352$  from 20.

**Figure (1):** Illustrates that 99.1% of the studied students have a positive perception regarding career choices, and only 0.9% have a negative Perception.

**Table (3):** Presents that the highest agreement percentage is a bad societal image for a male nurse, no cooperation of medical staff, and no specific job title to be called (21.4%, 32.3%, and 19.8%, respectively).

**Figure (2):** presents that 56%, 44.0% of the studied students reports that the social rank of healthcare-related jobs are medicine and nursing , respectively.

**Table (4):** presents no relation between demographic characteristics of the studied students with perception and demographic characteristics except the feeling of nurses student about nursing as a professional  $P$  value 0.018.

### Discussion:

No one can deny the importance of understanding how future nurses perceive and understand the nursing profession. This information will be

invaluable to nursing schools and nursing leaders in their efforts to successfully staff and maintain their healthcare workforce and correct the distorted image of nursing and nursing as a profession (Mohamed & El-Sayed, 2013). Nurses' perceptions of the profession's image might influence their decision to enter, stay in, promote, and progress a nursing profession (Emeghebo, 2012; Dhandapani & Gopichandran; 2019).

The current study showed that nearly half of the studied students aged 18 years, more than half were male, and nearly two-thirds lived in rural areas. Nearly three-quarters mentioned the presence of a nurse friend, nearly one-third said the main reason for enrollment was the desire to help, and the majority had a proud feeling about nursing as a profession. These findings contradicted a previous study conducted by Rayan et al., (2019), which found that junior nursing students and nursing interns had a different opinion of the public's perception of nursing. Many eligible and motivated males have turned away from nursing because of the public's shift in perception of the profession, which has resulted in better job security, higher wages, and a greater sense of national respect for their efforts (Alexander, 2010 & Harding et al., 2012). Additionally, family members, friends, nursing students, and nurses contributed to her success in the field. They all knew at least one person in the nursing profession (Achilles, 2010 & Ali et al., 2020) .

In keeping with previous research, nursing students see their job as a way to help others improve their health and well-being (Beck, 2012). Findings revealed that the majority of first-year nursing

students were proud of their profession and that there is a tendency among nursing students to change the subject in front of others. But some of them were shy, and no one dared to challenge the profession because of this. **Milisen et al. (2010) & Al-Jarrah (2013)** found that while discussing the nursing profession, most students feel pleased with their accomplishments, and family members' opinions had the greatest influence on improving students' perceptions.

The current study's finding illustrates that most studied students positively perceived the nursing profession (This answer the first study question). They were changing the nursing image in the Covid-19 and following the outbreak. A survey of nursing students at the University of **Zulu & Ngoma (2015)** found that nearly three-quarters of the students had a positive view of the nursing profession, and the majority said that they had seen a shift from a negative to a positive view of the nursing profession after enrolling in nursing school. According to **Mohamed & El-Sayed (2013)**, the vast majority of junior undergraduate nursing students have a good view of a nursing career and regard it as a profession respected by their peers in the medical field.

According to a survey of Jordanian associate nursing students, most of them attended the program for financial reasons or had no other possibilities for employment (**Al-Jarrah, 2013**), & **Hoeve et al. (2014)** reported that nurses have a poor impression of their profession.

The current study finding revealed a moderate mean scores perception to the description of the profession was  $20.6 \pm 2.263$  from 30, perception to society's view was  $14.58 \pm 1.872$  from 20, and students' perception of benefits of the nursing profession was  $28.25 \pm 3.050$  from 40 and students' perception to self-satisfaction in nursing was  $13.55 \pm 2.352$  from 20.

In line with previous findings, it was found by **Ibrahim et al. (2015)** that Egyptian and Jordanian nursing students have a good opinion of the image of the profession in all four areas: description of the profession, society's view, professional advantages, and a sense of self-satisfaction in the profession. About 55.8% of the participants in this study (455 people) were men. In Egypt, **Abdel-Halem et al. (2011)** found that many Egyptian male nursing students had a favorable view of nursing as a vocation. **Chauke (2014)** found that the students' perceptions of nursing as a recognized and admired profession had changed after the course. According to **Abushaikh et al. (2014)**, mentioned that male student nurses still have an unfavorable opinion of stereotypes in nursing. In the second aspect and

society's perception, the image of nursing as a career is developed and recognized more than before.

This finding was explained as secondary school students, particularly men, have recently been discovered to have a higher flow rate than expected, given their perception of nursing as a respected and appreciated profession, career security, travel chances, and high grades. The Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Health collaborated to spread health perception about the importance of the nursing profession, especially during and following the outbreak of Coronavirus -19, as well as improving the conditions of its workers, increasing compensation for infection, and improving their psychological empowerment by moral stimulation.

The perception of the nursing profession among nursing students is changing in a positive direction, according to **Al Jarrah (2013) & Li et al. (2020)**. The majority of students enroll in the nursing program for financial or employment reasons. Furthermore, nursing schools, the media, and the public's perception of the nursing profession should focus on the good aspects of nursing. In keeping with the third part of the perception of the image, benefits, and advantages of the nursing profession. In line with **Chauke (2014)**, this study showed that students' perceptions of the nursing profession and job satisfaction influence the public's perception of the profession. Self-identification as a nurse and deciding to pursue a nursing profession are two of the most important internal traits needed to become a competent nurse (**Gidman et al. & Safadi, et al. 2011, Girvin et al. 2016**).

The current study findings presented that the highest agreement percentage was regarding no cooperation of medical staff, a bad societal image for a male nurse, and having no specific job title to be called (32.3%, 21.4%, and 19.8%, respectively). Moreover, presented that 56% of the studied students answered the social rank of healthcare-related jobs was medicine, and 44.0% was nursing; this was accorded to **Ibrahim, et al. (2015)** mentioned that a majority saw the nursing career of participants as having a number of drawbacks, second only to medicine in importance. For secondary students, in particular, having the nursing profession ranked second improved its standing. This finding contradicted **Abdel El-Halem et al. (2011) & Al-Jarrah, (2013)** reported it as six ranks.

The finding of the current study illustrated that 100.0% of the studied student mentioned family member opinion was the first factor related to change in nursing image after joining the faculty of nursing, 91.2% was the public view about nursing, 84.8% was a relationship with friends, 83.5% was the clinical training, and 82.4% was the effect of the faculty

member. **El-Sharkawy & El Hadad (1996)** supported these results, which studied "factors affecting students' choice of nursing as a career in Egypt and Syria" and presented that family members who made the career path in nursing had a considerable influence. They showed that family members were the most motivating factors in their decision to pursue nursing and were the primary source of moral support throughout their schooling years.

As reported by **Rayan et al. (2019)**, the majority of participants had a relative or friend who worked in the nursing profession as one of their primary motivations for pursuing a nursing career. These motivations also positively impacted students' perceptions of nursing (**Beck, 2012**). Junior nursing students and nurse interns' perceptions on the situation the public perception of nursing is consistent with the findings of **Abdel El Halem et al. (2011)**, who conducted a study in Egypt on "Undergraduate Male Nursing Students' Perception about the Image of the Nursing Profession," and discovered a significant relationship between the perception of nursing as a profession and having family members, friends, or relatives who are nurses. Secondary students were positively influenced by information provided to them by relatives and friends before entering the nursing profession, as well as by information provided by the media.

The current study finding presented that relation between feeling of nurses student about nursing as a professional and their perception but no relation between age, gender, and residence (This answering the second question). This finding is agreed to **Devi & Devi, (2015)**, assessed Knowledge and attitude toward nursing as profession and their preference for nursing as a career among senior secondary students; revealed that no significant association found between the perception of students with age, sex, type of family, and residence.

Also, **Sathekge (2014)** investigated the roles and perceptions of career guidance teachers in influencing learners' choice of nursing as a career, showed that age and gender have no influence on them suggesting nursing as a career.

### Conclusion:

Nearly one-third said the main reason for enrollment is the desire to help, and the majority of them have a proud feeling about nursing as a profession. Most secondary school students enrolled in the faculty of nursing had positive perception regarding career choices and relation between feeling of nurses' student about nursing as a professional and their perception but no relation between age, gender, and residence and their perception. Also, the studied

students believed that nursing professions held the second social rank.

### Recommendations:

Develop and implement orientation training programs for secondary students before their admission to the profession and investigate their perspectives in a different region of Egypt and recruiting needs to design in light of evidence that family members' perception of nursing impact the professional decision-making of teenagers.

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