

48th World Congress on

Advanced Nursing Research

June 14-15, 2018 | Dublin, Ireland

Factors influencing the high school students' choice of a nursing career in Bahrain: Development of a best practice model for nursing recruitment

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Statement of the Problem: In response to the shortage of nurses, Bahrain continues to have high dependence on expatriate nurses to maintain the health services. The development and expansion of an indigenous nursing profession through increasing the number of Bahrainis working as nurses must be a health service priority. However, in attracting local candidates to study nursing, the public image of nursing in the Middle East continues to be of concern. The study aimed to identify factors that influence the high school students and their parents to choose the nursing profession as a future career and to explore and test strategic interventions to promote nursing as a career.

Methodology: A mixed methods research approach was used incorporating quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The study sample included high school students, students' parents, career guidance counsellors and nursing students. A one-group pretest-posttest design was also used to introduce a nursing recruitment intervention to a group of high school students.

Findings: Generally, high school students, parents, career guidance counsellors and nursing students have positive perceptions about nursing. However, nursing does not seem to be an attractive career option. It is proposed that the public perceptions of people about nursing may be grounded in strong cultural influences and any efforts to improve the enrolment and retention of Bahraini nurses should consider enhancing the social values of the nursing profession.

Conclusions: This study is seminal in being the first to report on factors that affect the high school students' perceptions and choice of nursing as a career in Bahrain. The findings are important in ensuring indigenous nursing developments in the small country of Bahrain and indeed the wider Gulf region. Recommendations are made for nursing practice and education through the Nursing Positive Recruitment Arabic Model (NURS-P.R.A.M) to work together to adopt new and creative strategies that can be employed to combat unfounded negative perceptions of nursing which may exist



Figure 1: The Nursing Positive Recruitment Arabic Model (NURS-P.R.A.M).

Biography

Eman Tawash was qualified as a Registered Nurse and worked as a Nursing Lecturer in different institutions for many years. She did her Master's in Health Professions Education and her PhD in Nursing education and recruitment. She is currently the Director of BSc Nursing programme in RCSI Bahrain. She is very interested in research, especially nursing and health professions education research.

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