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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

A Triangulation study: Bahraini nursing students' perceptions of nursing as a career

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Abstract

Background: There is a broad international literature examining the perceptions, experiences and values of nursing students with very little investigative work from the Gulf region and no published work on the perceptions of student nurses from Bahrain. The literature shows that students have a wide range of pre-existing perceptions about nursing and that those early perceptions have a profound influence on their decision to continue with their nursing studies. Historically, in a context of migration, Bahrain has been attractive to expatriate nurses and this has created an overreliance on external manpower which leads to the detriment of developing an indigenous nursing profession. This study aims to identify the perceptions and experiences of student nurses in Bahrain about nursing as a career choice and generate an understanding of the factors influencing recruitment to nursing from the Bahraini population.

Methods: A triangulation research design engaging quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was used in the study. Data were obtained through student nurses' written reflections, self-reporting questionnaires and focus groups collected during their nursing programme. The study participants were the first ever cohort of 38 Bahraini nursing students attending the first private University in Bahrain where the study took place. Qualitative data was analyzed using Colaizzi's methodology and quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS Version 17.

Results: The participants perceived nursing as caring, helping people and a humanitarian job. Nursing was considered to be a tough job and not well accepted socially with cultural issues impacting on the values attached to nursing as a career choice. Participants prior to entering nursing used the internet as the most potent source of information and they were also motivated by their parents and friends to join nursing. Participants stated their commitment to a nursing career, and their plans to continue with participation in higher education.

Conclusions: Some of the issues raised in the study are reflective of the international literature; however there are fundamental issues particular to the Gulf region, which will require attention in a context of an overall national nursing recruitment strategy.

Key words

Undergraduate nursing students, Middle- eastern nursing perceptions, Culture, Recruitment strategies, Bahrain

1 Introduction

The worldwide shortage of nurses has focused political and professional discourse on the current shortfall in the number of individuals who are pursuing nursing as a career and those who are leaving the profession. Such trends have serious implications on the health care industry as a whole. To attract more individuals to the profession, a positive image of nursing needs to be engendered by nurse education and the general community. The projection of a positive image of nurses and nursing has been a principal concern of the profession with resultant changes through the creation of a graduate profession in many jurisdictions and efforts to enhance the clinical nursing career pathway.

The experiences and concerns of nursing students is a constant theme in the professional press and consume many hours of deliberation in Schools of Nursing. The student nurse issues are multiple and include trying to survive on a meager bursary and difficulty with finding employment at the end of training. It therefore would appear that dedication and altruism in caring for people are not the only considerations.

We have a general understanding of the issues associated with student nurses in the west; however there is little appreciation of the issues that affect a steadily increasing number of nationals from the gulf region entering the nursing profession. In that regard this study is significant as it will place the perceptions of a cohort of Bahraini student nurses in a context of the international literature. The study was located in a new University in Bahrain established in 2004, which was the first independent college to undertake the undergraduate and postgraduate education and training of nurses. The establishment of an undergraduate nursing programme by a private western university in September 2006 represented an important opportunity for Bahraini persons to enter nursing. This study reports on the perceptions of the first cohort of student nurses recruited to the university. In order to ensure a rich data source encompassing quantitative and qualitative data, a methodological triangulation research design was utilized.

1.1 Context of the study

The Kingdom of Bahrain is a small island country with a population of just over 1 million inhabitants [1] and is located near the southern shores of the Arabian Gulf. At the beginning of the 20th century, Bahrain was one of the first countries in the gulf region to initiate formal health services. However, nursing as a profession only became visible in 1931 when the first qualified nurse, Indian educated, was appointed to work in Bahrain [2]. The first nursing school in the Arabian Gulf was officially inaugurated in Bahrain in October 1959 offering a 4 year training programme. In the 1970s Bahraini nurses were sent abroad to obtain specialization in areas of nursing practice [3].

With the development of health services in Bahrain in the 1960s, there was a requirement for more qualified nurses. The increasing number of nurses and the need for quality assurance in 1987 gave rise to the publication of 'The Regulation of Practicing Nursing and Midwifery' [3].

In 1991 the Bahrain Nursing Society was established with an aim to develop the nursing profession and to make recommendations on strategies and policies to regulate nursing practice.

1.2 Nursing regulation

The Ministry of Health (MOH) in Bahrain is responsible for planning and providing health services with limited but growing participation from the private sectors. The Office of Licensure and Registration within the MOH is responsible for regulation, licensing and re-licensing, accreditation and other issues related to the regulation of health professions including nursing [4].

Based on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) regulations, Bahrain has enacted a policy that regulates the registration and licensure of nurses and midwives. Although the policy is enacted as part of an umbrella law covering the allied health professions, nursing and midwifery, each profession has its own implementing resolution [5]. In 2002, the Office of

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Licensure and Registration in collaboration with Bahrain Nursing Society developed the national code of professional conduct for nurses.

1.3 Nursing shortages

According to the most recent Bahrain health statistics, the number of registered nurses in Bahrain is 2,655 and 1,328 are Bahraini nationals [6], while the need is for 4,000 more nurses [7]. It has been reported that, in Bahrain there are 550 nurses for every 100,000 people [4]. Bahrain health services require further nurses if the country is to fulfill the World Health Organization's parameters [7].

The International Council of Nurses [8] identified that every geographic area of the world is short of nurses. Health policy experts predict that the current shortage of nurses will persist and perhaps even deteriorate during the next 30 years and one of the most important reasons for the shortage is that very few young people are choosing nursing as a career.

The 2001 World Health Assembly Resolution on Nursing and Midwifery acknowledged the critical shortage of nurses and the key role that nurses play in health care, and called for the World Health Organization to assist countries in optimizing their contribution to solve this problem [9].

1.4 Nursing recruitment

Nurse migration is a global phenomenon with a dominant pattern of nurse migration from low-income to middle and high-income countries. Over the years the driving forces behind nurse migration has challenged nursing employers and focused the attention of international organizations such as the International Council of Nurses [10] and the World Health Organization [11]. Internationally, the current rates of migration are difficult to accurately assess. However, the link between economic conditions in a country and 'push and pull' factors [12] in migration is clear.

Bahrain continues to be attractive to expatriate nurses and this has created an overreliance on external manpower which leads to the detriment of developing an indigenous nursing profession. Over the years, nursing recruitment initiatives have been undertaken in many countries of the world to meet the demand for nurses in Bahrain. Today, there continues to be high dependence on expatriate nurses to maintain the health services of Bahrain. From an observer point of view, there seems to be an emerging policy of commitment to the development of undergraduate nursing education in Bahrain and the recruitment of student nurses with a long-term objective to lessen the dependence on expatriate nurses.

The establishment of an undergraduate nursing programme by a private western university in September 2006 represented an important opportunity for Bahraini persons to enter nursing. The University which was established in Bahrain in 2004 became the first independent college to undertake the undergraduate and postgraduate education and training of nurses.

It is an objective of the University to attract the highest caliber candidates to study nursing and this was reflected during the promotional and recruitment campaigns in Bahrain. In order to build a valid and reliable process which enhances nursing recruitment in Bahrain, an understanding of the perspectives of the first group of students about nursing is important.

1.5 Cultural perspectives

In attracting local candidates to study nursing, the public image of nursing in the Middle East has been of great concern. It has been suggested anecdotally that the perceptions of Bahraini people about nursing may be grounded in strong cultural influences.

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the role of nurses was traditionally part of the role of women, but only for their own families. To take up nursing as a career, girls required education and training, for which there were limited opportunities. Generally, nursing schools were perceived as simply training students to carry out physicians' orders [13]. In addition, in

most Arab countries, nursing has been generally restricted to the area of maternal care provided by dayas (the ancient sisterhood of midwives) [14].

Within the Middle Eastern region, it has been reported by the WHO [5] that despite the great progressive developments in both nursing practice and education, nurses were not involved in policy decisions related to the nursing profession. According to WHO [5], this may be attributed to work undertaken by a predominantly female work force: low pay, low status, poor working conditions and few opportunities for promotion.

In Bahrain, nursing has traditionally been an unacceptable career option, and few females studied professional nursing. At present, there is increasing recognition that nursing has become a career opportunity. Yet it would appear that families in Bahrain may be influencing their daughters not to enter nursing because they perceive nursing as an unsuitable profession for girls. Observations made about the public image of nursing in Bahrain suggest nursing is perceived as a low paying, low status job involving much hard and unpleasant work. There is also anecdotal evidence that, culturally, it is not appropriate for females to take care of male patients. Socially, working shift duty presents problems for females, considering their responsibilities as wives and mothers.

For many years, Bahrain has taken several initiatives to make the profession attractive for Bahraini males and females. Despite the cultural issues, the majority of nurses in Bahrain are female. In 2008, there were 149 male nurses compared to 1,179 female nurses [6].

Since newly graduated nurses are a key resource for addressing the nursing shortage [13], it is essential to influence the public image of the nursing profession as a means of encouraging young people in Bahrain to enter the nursing profession. To this end, understanding the perceptions of Bahraini nursing students is essential.

1.6 International perspective

Noteworthily, the international literature shows that early perceptions of students have a profound influence on their decision as to whether continue with their nursing studies, and students frequently make decisions to leave nursing against the wishes or without the support from their school or family [15].

Students have a wide range of pre-existing perceptions about nursing. A study of 1000 American nursing students reported that students believed nursing to be physically challenging and that there is inadequate respect and recognition of nursing [16]. Other studies reported that nursing students recognize nursing as a caring profession and as an opportunity to help people gain a better health [17-20]. Nursing students also viewed nursing as a noble and well-regarded career path [21] and one which requires strength, patience and compassion [15, 22].

Apart from the traditional perception of nursing as caring, a longitudinal study that examined nursing students' perceptions of nursing showed that students considered nursing as a profession based on scientific knowledge and requires expertise in nursing and responsibility. They also viewed nursing as a 'medical-technical' activity [23].

Sand-Jecklin and Schaffer [19] added that students most frequently reported choosing nursing because of the availability of career opportunities, jobs security, salary, and interest in nursing. In their study, students identified pursuing further education as a career goal followed by 'doing one's best in nursing'. Another study showed that students choose to study nursing because it offered work abroad and opportunities for further professional development [24]. The influence of role models in choosing nursing as a career was also reported [19]. A number of studies found that past experiences with illness, working in health care and having family members as nurses were important motives for undertaking nursing [17, 18, 25].

Buerhaus, Donelan, Norman and Dittus [16] identified information and advice from practicing nurses as a factor that positively influenced students' decision to become a nurse. Additionally, friends, parents and other family members had a positive influence on students' perceptions of nursing [16, 24]. Information and career advisers were also found to have

influenced students' decisions to become a nurse [16]. Some studies highlighted the role of media and society as factors influencing the choice of nursing as a career [19, 26].

2 Methods

The objectives of this study were to: Identify nursing students' perceptions and experiences of nursing as a career choice. Identify sources the students used to obtain information about nursing and factors motivated them to enroll in the nursing programme.

2.1 Research design

A methodological triangulation research approach involving quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection was considered appropriate, as it is ideally used when studying concepts that have different dimensions. Therefore, the primary purpose in using methodological triangulation was to facilitate investigation of the different dimensions of the research question. Also, the combination of both types of data would ensure richness in the findings [27]. In this study, quantitative data were collected using a self-reporting questionnaire and qualitative data were collected using written reflections and focus groups.

Consistent with a between-method methodological approach, where dissimilar but complementary methods are used to aid convergent validity [27], the researchers developed the content of the questionnaire based on the findings from the written reflections, and similarly devised the questions used in the focus groups based on the findings from the questionnaire.

2.2 Sample

A convenient sample of the first intake of nursing students enrolled in the nursing programme at the University in September 2006 (N=38) participated in this study. The cohort included 5 males and 33 females aged between 18-20 years.

2.3 Data collection and analysis

Three different data collection methods were used at different points in the education programme:

1) Written reflections: During the first year of the programme, participants were asked to reflect on their pre entry and early entry experiences and understandings of nursing.

2) Self-rating questionnaire: Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire on perceptions and experiences of nursing. Consistent with the principles of triangulation, the questionnaire was developed based on the themes extracted from analyzing the written reflections. The instrument consisted of two sections; the first included some demographic details like age, gender and marital status. The second section included five questions and focused on: motivation to study nursing, sources of information about nursing, perceptions of nursing as a career and future career intentions. Participants were given instructions to circle one, two or all appropriate items listed under each question. The items were selected based on the findings from the students' reflections.

3) Focus group: The research cohort was assigned randomly into two focus groups of 19 students and interviews were conducted in English and tape-recorded. The interview schedule was developed based on the results of the data collection from written reflections and the questionnaire. The focus groups were facilitated by two of the researchers. Before the interviews, the facilitators outlined the procedure and process for the conduct of the focus groups.

Feedback from three experienced nursing experts was obtained to ensure face and content validity of the questionnaire. A pilot test was undertaken and minor modifications were made to the instrument. Using the data collected, a Chronbach's Alpha was applied to ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire and was reported 0.79 reliability.

Colaizzi's [28] methodology was applied to analyze the qualitative data. Using this method, significant statements from the qualitative data were first extracted, meanings from those statements were formulated and clusters of themes were determined. Descriptive statistical analysis of the quantitative data was undertaken using the SPSS version 17.

Ethics approval for the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at the University. Anonymity was assured and no names were written on the questionnaire or the reflection assignments. Students' permission to participate in the study was obtained following detailed explanation of the purpose, methods and expectations of the study and voluntary participation was assured.

3 Analysis and results

In this study, the researchers collected the initial data from the participants' written reflections. Content analysis of those reflections was done following Colaizzi's [28] methodology. The first step was to read all the reflections and extract all the significant statements written by the students. The repeated statements were calculated for the purpose of identifying frequency.

The second step involved formulating meanings from the statements and clustering them into different categories. The categories revealed three main themes representing the study objectives:

- Perceptions of nursing
- Information and motivation to study nursing
- Future career intentions

The three themes identified from the reflections were further explored through both, the questionnaire and focus groups. The findings will be presented based on these three themes. Qualitative data produced from the reflections will be discussed first, followed by data from the self-reported questionnaires and finally the focus groups.

3.1 Demographic data

The participants included a total of 38 nursing students; 33 (87%) females and 5 (13%) males with an age range 18 - 20 years (mean age 19, SD = 0.95). All students graduated from government high schools.

3.2 Perceptions of nursing

It was found that most of the participants described nursing as a caring profession and a humanitarian job. Good communication was also identified as one of the characteristics of nursing. It is important to note that respondents believed nursing to be a hard and demanding job, but a minority believed that it required patience. Interestingly, one of the key tenets of good nursing management 'time management' was raised through the open comments section 'It is a challenge for nurses to manage their time'.

A minority of the participants perceived nursing to be highly skilled and requiring nurses to be knowledgeable. An important finding was, only a minority of respondents perceived nursing to be enjoyable work to do.

Table 1 provides a summary overview of the participants' based on the questionnaire. Notably, 84% of respondents indicated that they entered nursing on the basis of nursing as a caring profession and helping other people, with 71% describing nursing as a humanitarian job.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of Nursing as reflected in the questionnaires

Characteristics	Number (Percentage)*
Nursing is a caring profession	32 (84%)
Nursing is a humanitarian job	27 (71%)
Nursing is a hard job	25 (67%)
Nurses have good communication with people	21 (56%)
Nursing requires patience	11 (30%)
Nurses are highly skilled	9 (24%)
Nurses are knowledgeable	4 (10%)
Nursing is an enjoyable job	3 (8%)

*Respondents could select more than one characteristic

As indicated previously the focus group interview schedule was developed out of the results of the reflections and questionnaire. In the focus groups, participants confirmed that nursing is a caring and humanitarian profession with no exceptions. Participants clarified this point by suggesting that nurses have close and personal contact with patients and providing holistic care. Some respondents commented:

> '*Nurses stay with patients and look after them throughout their shift' 'Nurses not only take care of patients, but also their relatives'*

The participants explained what they meant by describing nursing as a hard job by reporting that there are new things to learn every day, it requires being exposed to the human bodies and doing dirty things. It was stated that:

> *'Nursing accepts no mistakes as it involves dealing with human life'*

Respondents also suggested that nursing is not very well accepted socially, as it is difficult for females bearing children to work shift duty. It was indicated that nurses were faced with stress related to overload of work and have many health problems like backache and varicose veins. A respondent suggested:

> '*My aunt is a nurse and she developed varicose veins because of standing throughout her shift'*

3.3 Information and motivation

The participants listed in their reflections a variety of sources of information they accessed about nursing, these mainly included the internet, friends and relative nurses. As evidenced by the participants' responses to the questionnaire, the internet served as an important source of information with 46% having obtained information from the internet. Friends (36%) and relative nurses (24%) were also influential. A minority of participants (12%) acquired information through the media. In using the internet, respondents suggested that chat rooms were helpful. Typically, it was also stated:

> *'I talked to my friend who is a nursing student and she told me about nursing'.*

Table 2. Motivating Factors to enter nursing

	Number (Percentage)*
Parents	25 (66%)
Friends	9 (24%)
Relatives who were nurses	6 (15%)
Nurses in hospital	3 (8%)
Self (Childhood dream)	1 (3%)

*Participants could select the two most appropriate factors

Table 2 illustrates the factors that motivated the participants to join nursing. In their reflections, participants also highlighted the motivations to study nursing. A majority of respondents (66%) stated that their parents served as the greatest motivation to enter nursing. Many respondents were also motivated by their friends (24%) and relatives who were nurses (15%).

In the focus groups, respondents indicated that their parents believed that nursing offered a good job opportunity and the salaries were good. Some parents also thought that nurses help people and they learn many things that are helpful for their personal and social life. The influence of family and personal ambition was clear.

> *'My mother always wanted to be a nurse, but she couldn't and so she wanted me to make her dream becomes true'*

> *'I chose to study nursing because it was my dream when I was a little girl'*

The study also showed that 34% of respondents decided to join nursing on leaving school. They stated that nursing at that time was the best choice compared to other studies available to them, with 29% of respondents making their decision after attending a career day during high school.

3.4 Future intentions

Table 3 outlines the early intentions of respondents in respect to nursing career. Notably further education featured highly with 61% of respondents expressing a desire to do their masters or doctoral nursing studies after graduation. Other respondents identified a career pathway as nurse supervisors, nurse specialists or continue their career as staff nurses. It is noted that clinical nursing careers do not appear attractive with only 8% selecting staff nurse and 8% selecting to specialize in nursing.

Table 3. Intentions of respondents in respect to nursing career

Intentions in respect to nursing career	Number (Percentage)
Continue higher education	21 (55%)
Become a supervisor	9 (24%)
Work as a staff nurse	3 (8%)
Specialize in nursing	3 (8%)
Become a nurse educator	2 (5%)

4 Discussion

The study indicated that, Bahraini nursing students, generally hold positive perceptions of nursing and this is indicative of the international literature, however there are particular issues in terms of culture and tradition that requires consideration.

4.1 Nursing and caring

The majority of respondents in this study perceived nursing as a caring profession and in essence helping people, and this is a strong theme in the literature [17-20]. This finding emphasizes the importance of ensuring that caring is not undervalued and is prominent in education programmes as the nursing profession continues to evolve in Bahrain. Consistent with our results, nursing educators have an important role in endorsing the principle that caring for oneself is congruent with caring for others [29].

The respondents also described nursing as the provision of holistic care, although it is suggested [30] that the delivery of holistic care may be outside the scope of novice practitioners who are likely to struggle with the complexity of holistic care. However O'Brien, Mooney and Glacken [20], argue that the provision of caring role models for nursing students in clinical settings may help address this issue. Respondents also recognized nursing as hard work and stressful, which was also identified in previous studies [24].

4.2 Nursing and culture

In this study, the impact of society and influence of culture and tradition is strongly reflected in the perceptions of nursing as a career. The respondents claimed that nursing is not very well accepted socially; however, it was suggested that the strong and positive perception of nursing as caring and helping may serve as a driving force in developing a strategy to reinforce the public views about nursing in society [31].

Whilst the majority of respondents in this study identified the desire to care for others as one important factor for their choice to study nursing, it should be noted that 34% of them had not selected nursing as their first career choice. This finding is not unique to this study as it was also revealed in other studies [17, 20].

The low representation of male students (13%) in the first intake of students (respondents) requires a particular emphasis on recruiting males to nursing. Although the representation of males would be generally reflective of similar international cohorts there are particular issues in a context of Bahrain. Given the sensitivities in terms of culture, religion and gender in a Muslim society, a sufficient number of males in nursing are important in supporting nursing and health policy in Bahrain and in meeting the needs of patients. It has been suggested [20] that media and social influence is important in promoting recruitment of males to nursing. A study of the barriers that impact on recruitment of males to nursing in Bahrain is suggested as a positive action in terms of improving the perception of males in nursing. This point was raised by Al Kandari and Lew [32] who suggested that encouraging more males to join nursing will help provide more male nurses to care for male clients, thus solve some of the socio-cultural problems encountered by female nurses.

4.3 Motivation and attitudes

Earlier research shows that nursing students' images of nursing may be traced to relatives who work in health care [33]. This study showed that parents and friends were very powerful motivators for them to join nursing which was congruent with the findings of previous studies [24]. This influence of significant people on students' perceptions suggests that positive marketing and recruitment strategies through the School of Nursing should target not only the students themselves, but the students' parents and peers as well.

While the majority of respondents found the internet to be a great source of information about nursing, very few respondents in this study identified other media to be helpful in providing them with information about nursing or to influence their perceptions of nursing, and this finding is consistent with other studies [19]. It is recommended that using the public media to promote and announce nursing developments will impact positively on the nursing profession in Bahrain.

This study also showed that a majority of the respondents reflected a positive attitude towards lifelong learning and they frequently identified pursuing higher education in nursing as a career goal, which suggests that undergraduate nursing education is viewed by the students as a platform [33] for their future nursing career. The failure of respondents to strongly reflect the desire for clinical career pathways requires much greater discussion and debate on the scope of nursing practice in Bahrain, and is incumbent on policy makers to promote clinical nursing career pathways that are attractive to nurses.

Clearly, there are deficits in promoting nursing practice in a professional capacity, and promoting positive public nursing campaigns on the role and scope of nursing practice and contribution to society can be helpful in addressing this deficit.

5 Conclusion

This study is seminal in being the first to report on student nurses perceptions in Bahrain. The results are important in ensuring indigenous nursing developments in Bahrain. The shortage of nurses is a common problem worldwide [10], and according to Al Kandari and Lew [32], this international shortage will continue unless drastic measures are taken. These facts validate the need to increase the number of Bahraini nationals entering nursing in order to meet future health care needs in Bahrain.

Nursing students' perceptions can both contribute to and prevent the possibilities of becoming a professional nurse, which makes it essential that Bahrain ensures a well-informed, best practice and positive nursing recruitment strategy. The work of Sand-Jecklin and Schaffer [19] elevates the importance of our study when they pointed out that students' perceptions of nursing upon entry into a nursing education programme may provide clues about their decisions to remain in nursing.

When educators understand nursing students' perceptions of nursing before, during and after their education programme, they can be more aware of potential disparities in student's ideals, expectations and realities of nursing practice [19].

It is recommended that further research is required to identify whether the perceptions held by this first cohort of Bahraini nursing students represent those of the other general nursing students in Bahrain. To improve the retention of nurses, there is a need for greater awareness and understanding by health policy makers and members of the profession of the barriers that nurses face and how these barriers have an impact on both male and female student nurses in the profession.

Nurse educators should aim to work more closely with high schools to portray a positive perception for students who are potential candidates for nursing education.

6 Relevance to clinical practice

This is a study of nursing students' perceptions of nursing as a future career and factors that have influenced their choice to study nursing. Having an understanding of the perceptions and future goals of nursing students may provide information that could be useful in identifying effective strategies to improve recruitment into nursing in Bahrain. In addition, an insight into how the nursing students perceive nursing is important for clinicians, as it provides registered nurses with an understanding of the students' perspectives and the support they require as they start their clinical practice.

According to this study, the opinions of parents about nursing have influenced career decision making of their children, and so it is imperative to plan recruitment strategies that not alone attract nursing candidates, but also influence the perceptions of parents.

Given the current international nursing shortage, it is incumbent on nursing educators, clinicians and employers to work together to come up with creative strategies that can be employed to combat unfounded negative perceptions of nursing which may exist.

A strong nursing profession is central to the future development of health services in Bahrain with less reliance on expatriate nurses and an increase in Bahraini nurses. The results of our study provide valuable insights to health policy makers and strategists.

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There are a number of study limitations. As data was collected at different points during the students' programme, the study did not examine the effect of the nursing educational programme on changing the nursing students' perceptions of nursing. Also, the study was located in one educational setting with one cohort of students from the private University, and the inclusion of the other nursing students from the government school would have strengthened the findings.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Contributions

Study design: SC; data collection and analysis: ET, EA, NZ; and manuscript preparation: ET, SC.

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