

"Understanding School Teachers' Knowledge and Attitude towards Nursing as a Profession: A Descriptive Study."

Dr. Chinna Chadayan¹, Melba Sahaya Sweety², V. P. Bharathy³

¹Professor, Enam Nursing College, Dhaka, Bangladesh

²Associate Professor, Enam Nursing College, Dhaka, Bangladesh

³BT Assistant, RC Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Natham, Dindigul Dist Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

Background:

Nursing is a vital yet often misunderstood profession facing challenges in attracting new talent. School teachers significantly influence students' career choices but their knowledge and attitudes toward nursing remain underexplored. Understanding teachers' perceptions can help improve career guidance and promote nursing as a respected career. This study aims to assess school teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward nursing to support better student awareness and interest.

Objective:

To assess the knowledge and attitude of selected private higher secondary school teachers in Natham, Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu, towards nursing as a profession, and to explore the association with socio-demographic variables.

Methods:

A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted among 27 purposively sampled private higher secondary school teachers. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising socio-demographic details, a knowledge assessment on nursing, and a 5-point Likert scale attitude measure. Descriptive statistics summarized the data, and Chi-square tests assessed associations between knowledge, attitude, and demographic variables.

Results:

The majority of participants were female (88.89%), aged 31–40 years (51.85%), and held a B.Ed qualification (55.56%). Knowledge levels were generally satisfactory: 29.63% demonstrated excellent knowledge, 29.63% good knowledge, and 25.93% moderate knowledge, while 14.81% had very poor knowledge. Attitude towards nursing was overwhelmingly positive, with 96.3% expressing positive or highly positive views. No significant associations were found between socio-demographic factors and teachers' knowledge or attitude towards nursing. However, only 7.41% had attended nursing-related seminars, and 37.04% included nursing in career guidance programs, indicating limited professional exposure.

Conclusion:

School teachers hold generally positive attitudes and satisfactory knowledge about nursing, regardless of socio-demographic background. Nevertheless, limited exposure to nursing seminars and its sparse inclusion in career guidance highlight the need for targeted awareness programs. Empowering teachers through structured

orientation and integrating nursing into career counselling can enhance their role in promoting nursing careers among students.

Keywords: Nursing profession, school teachers, knowledge, attitude, career guidance, descriptive study, India

INTRODUCTION

The nursing profession stands at a critical juncture, experiencing transformative changes in both recruitment and educational curriculum. As the healthcare environment evolves, so too does the role of nurses, prompting renewed interest and questions from society, particularly from those who guide the future generation. One such group includes school teachers, who play a pivotal role in shaping students' career aspirations and perceptions. Understanding teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward the nursing profession is, therefore, essential in influencing how students view nursing as a viable and respected career option.

Historically, nursing has been one of the oldest and noblest professions, rooted in care, compassion, and scientific knowledge. Despite its evolution into a complex and highly skilled discipline, public perceptions continue to be influenced by outdated stereotypes and societal biases (Das, Devi, Devi, & Bhutia, 2014). The profession has long been associated with femininity and subordination, which contributes to its lower preference among high-performing students (Das et al., 2014). While some students are motivated to pursue nursing due to a desire to serve others, the profession is often not considered attractive or prestigious when compared to careers in medicine or engineering.

Recent studies show that even as the demand for qualified nurses rises, many students do not choose nursing unless guided by positive role models such as teachers (Akoijam & Akoijam, 2015). School teachers, therefore, serve as key influencers in students' career choices. Their understanding of the nursing profession—its scope, relevance, and opportunities—can significantly shape students' attitudes. Unfortunately, misconceptions and limited awareness among educators may hinder the promotion of nursing as a promising career path (Elizabeth, Annakamatchi, & Santhi, 2017).

While many studies have explored students' perceptions of nursing, there is limited research focused on assessing the knowledge and attitudes of school teachers, especially within the Indian context. Given the vital role teachers play in guiding career choices, it becomes imperative to understand their views toward nursing. Therefore, this study aims to assess the knowledge and attitude of school teachers toward the nursing profession, recognizing their influence in shaping students' career aspirations. This understanding will help develop strategies to improve nursing's image and attract more students to the profession.

Objectives

1. To assess the socio-demographic characteristics of school teachers.
2. To assess the level of knowledge of school teachers regarding nursing as a profession
3. To assess the attitude of school teachers towards nursing as a profession
4. To determine the association between the knowledge and attitude of school teachers towards nursing as a profession with selected socio-demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach:

The study adopted a quantitative research approach to assess the knowledge and attitude of school teachers towards nursing as a profession.

Research Design:

A descriptive survey design was used for this study. This design is suitable for gathering information on the current status of the participants regarding their knowledge and attitude.

Sampling Technique:

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants based on specific inclusion criteria.

Sample:

The study was conducted among selected private higher secondary school teachers in Natham, Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu.

Sample Size:

The total sample size was 27 school teachers from selected higher secondary schools in Natham.

Tool:

A structured tool was developed based on the study objectives and a review of literature. The tool was divided into three parts:

Part A: Socio-Demographic Data

This section included items to collect demographic information such as age, gender, educational qualification, teaching experience, and previous exposure to or awareness of the nursing profession.

Part B: Knowledge Questionnaire

This section consisted of a structured set of questions designed to assess the knowledge of school teachers regarding nursing as a profession.

Part C: Attitude Scale

A 5-point Likert scale was used to assess the attitude of school teachers towards nursing as a profession. The scale ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, covering various statements that reflect common perceptions about the nursing field.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis were used to analyse the data. The level of knowledge and attitude was computed by frequency and percentage distribution. The association between level of knowledge and attitude with socio demographic variables were assessed by Chi Square test.

RESULTS

Section A: Findings on socio-demographic characteristics of school teachers.

Table 1 findings revealed that the majority of school teachers (51.85%) were aged between 31–40 years, indicating a predominantly young to mid-career workforce. A significant majority of participants were female (88.89%), reflecting the typical gender distribution in the teaching profession. In terms of educational qualification, most respondents (55.56%) held a B.Ed degree, while a smaller proportion were postgraduates from non-education fields (25.93%) and D.Ed holders (14.81%). Regarding teaching experience, 37.04% had 5–10 years, while 29.63% each had less than 5 years or 11–15 years of experience. Geographically, teachers were fairly distributed across rural (40.74%), urban (37.04%), and semi-urban (22.22%) settings. The highest proportion (40.74%) taught at the higher secondary level, followed by middle (25.93%), primary (22.22%), and secondary levels (11.11%). Notably, 37.04% had relatives in the nursing profession, suggesting moderate personal exposure. However, only 7.41% had attended nursing-related seminars, indicating low professional engagement with the field. Furthermore, just 37.04% reported the inclusion of nursing in their school's career guidance programs, highlighting a gap in systematic career counselling efforts related to nursing.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic characteristics of school teachers (n = 27)

Variable	Category	n	%
1. Age	20–30 years	8	29.63%
	31–40 years	14	51.85%
	41–50 years	5	18.52%
	51 years and above	0	0.00%
2. Gender	Male	3	11.11%
	Female	24	88.89%
	Other	0	0.00%
	Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
3. Educational Qualification	D.Ed	4	14.81%
	B.Ed	15	55.56%
	M.Ed	0	0.00%
	Graduate (Non-ed)	1	3.70%
	Postgraduate (Non-ed)	7	25.93%
	Others	0	0.00%
4. Years of Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	8	29.63%
	5–10 years	10	37.04%
	11–15 years	8	29.63%
	More than 15 years	1	3.70%
5. Location of School	Urban	10	37.04%
	Semi-urban	6	22.22%
	Rural	11	40.74%
6. Teaching Level	Primary (1–5)	6	22.22%
	Middle (6–8)	7	25.93%
	Secondary (9–10)	3	11.11%
	Higher Secondary (11–12)	11	40.74%
7. Relatives in Nursing	Yes	10	37.04%
	No	17	62.96%
8. Attended Nursing Seminar	Yes	2	7.41%
	No	25	92.59%
9. Career Guidance Includes Nursing	Yes	10	37.04%
	No	17	62.96%

Section B: Assessment of the Level of Knowledge about Nursing as a Profession among School Teachers

Table 2: Distribution of Knowledge scores among school teachers (n=27)

Knowledge Level	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	8	29.63%
Good	8	29.63%
Moderate	7	25.93%
Poor	0	0.00%
Very Poor	4	14.81%

Table 2 findings indicate that a significant portion of the respondents demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the nursing profession. Specifically, 29.63% of participants showed excellent knowledge, correctly answering 9 or more of the 10 questions, while another 29.63% demonstrated good knowledge, with 7–8 correct responses. Additionally, 25.93% of the participants had a moderate level of knowledge, scoring between 5 and 6. Importantly, no participants fell into the “poor” category, suggesting a baseline awareness among all but a few. However, 14.81% of respondents were classified as having very poor knowledge, indicating a gap in basic awareness that may require targeted educational interventions. Overall, the data

suggest that while most respondents are reasonably well-informed about the nursing profession, a small segment lacks essential knowledge, highlighting the need for improved orientation or awareness initiatives.

Section C: Overview of Attitudes of School Teachers towards the Nursing Profession

Table 3: Distribution of attitude scores among school teachers (n=27)

Attitude Tone	Grade	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Positive	Excellent	8	29.63%
Positive	Good	18	66.67%
Neutral	Moderate	1	3.70%
Negative	Poor	0	0.00%

Table 3 data indicates a predominantly positive attitude, with the majority of responses falling under the "Positive" (66.67%) and "Highly Positive" (29.63%) categories, together accounting for 96.3% of the total. This suggests a strong level of satisfaction or approval among respondents. The presence of only one "Neutral" response (3.70%) shows minimal ambivalence, while the complete absence of negative feedback reflects a highly favorable perception overall.

Section D: Statistical Association between Teachers' Knowledge and Attitude towards Nursing and Selected Variables

The study findings revealed no statistically significant association between the level of knowledge and attitude of school teachers towards nursing as a profession and their selected socio-demographic variables. This suggests that factors such as age, gender, educational qualification, and teaching experience did not influence their knowledge or attitude. Therefore, socio-demographic characteristics had minimal impact on perceptions about the nursing profession.

DISCUSSION

The study assessed school teachers' knowledge and attitude towards nursing as a profession and explored their association with socio-demographic variables. Most participants were female, aged 31–40, held a B.Ed degree, and had 5–10 years of teaching experience, mainly in private schools across rural, urban, and semi-urban areas. While some had relatives in nursing, few had attended nursing seminars or integrated nursing into career guidance, reflecting limited professional exposure. Knowledge levels were generally satisfactory, with 29.63% demonstrating excellent knowledge, another 29.63% showing good knowledge, and 25.93% having moderate knowledge. However, 14.81% showed very poor knowledge, highlighting a need for targeted awareness efforts. Attitude towards nursing was overwhelmingly positive, with 66.67% displaying a positive attitude and 29.63% a highly positive one, and no participants expressing negative views. Overall, while teachers appear supportive of nursing as a profession, enhancing their knowledge through structured orientation could strengthen their role in guiding students toward nursing careers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is evident that school teachers possess generally positive attitudes and satisfactory knowledge about nursing as a profession, irrespective of their socio-demographic backgrounds. However, their limited exposure to nursing-related seminars and the minimal inclusion of nursing in career guidance programs point to a gap in structured awareness. As key influencers in students' academic and career decisions, teachers have a vital role in shaping perceptions about nursing. Empowering them with accurate and comprehensive information through targeted orientation programs is essential. Integrating nursing into school career counselling frameworks and fostering collaboration between educational and healthcare institutions can further enhance student awareness and interest in the profession. These efforts will not only strengthen the visibility and value of nursing as a career choice but also contribute to addressing the ongoing need for qualified healthcare professionals.

IMPLICATIONS

- Teachers play a crucial role as career influencers; their positive attitude towards nursing can encourage students to consider it as a career.
- Limited knowledge gaps among some teachers indicate a need for enhanced professional development related to healthcare careers.
- Inclusion of nursing in school career guidance could improve students' awareness and interest in nursing professions.
- Strengthening collaborations between educational institutions and healthcare sectors is essential for effective career counselling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement targeted orientation and training programs to improve teachers' knowledge about nursing as a career.
- Integrate nursing and other healthcare professions into school career guidance curricula systematically.
- Organize regular seminars and workshops for teachers to increase their exposure to nursing and healthcare developments.
- Encourage partnerships between schools and local healthcare organizations to facilitate firsthand experiences and career talks.
- Conduct further research with a larger and more diverse sample.

LIMITATIONS

- The study was limited to selected private higher secondary school teachers in Natham, restricting generalizability to other regions.
- The small sample size (27 teachers) may limit the strength of statistical conclusions.
- The cross-sectional design provides a snapshot but does not capture changes over time in knowledge or attitudes.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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