

Perception and Social Image of the Nursing Profession: A Study from Pokhara, Kaski

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To Cite this article: Poudel, S., & Baral, B. (2025). Perception and social image of the nursing profession: A study from Pokhara, Kaski. *International Research Journal of MMC*, 6(4), 59–69. <https://doi.org/10.3126/irjmmc.v6i4.85248>

Submitted: 15 August 2025 **Accepted:** 21 September 2025 **Published:** 30 September 2025

Abstract

Nursing is unique profession focused on the care of individuals, families, and communities to attain, maintain or recover optimal health and quality of life. This study is designed to find out the public perception regarding nursing profession among people of Pokhara, Kaski. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted for the study by using non-probability purposive sampling technique with 110 respondents of age group 40-59 years from Pokhara, Kaski. A structured face to face interview schedule with 5-point Likert scale was used to collect the data. Obtained Data were entered in SPSS and analyzed by using descriptive statistics for baseline information and perception. Inferential statistics method chi-square test was used to find the association between selected background information and perception on nursing profession. The finding of the study revealed that more than half 51.8% of the respondent had a positive perception and 48.2% had negative perception regarding nursing profession. There was statically significant association between level of perception and occupation (p value = <0.041) and educational status and level of perception (p value = <0.006). Hence, quality of nursing profession needs to be enhancing the positive perception among people through quality of nursing services.

Keywords: nursing profession, perception, public, nurse, social image of nurse

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Nursing is a noble Profession and nursing service exists in Nepal from the very beginning. In the initial stage of time only mother of the family provide nursing care to the sick, injured, and elderly. Time has changed but the inner spirit of the nursing retains the same care for all people (Lotha & Lewis, 2023). Nursing was considered as subservient to doctor (Komen, 2010). Since 19th century nursing profession began to grow and become a highly demanding profession. It was rise with the founder of Modern nursing Florence Nightingale (Freeman, 2024). Nurses have a broader range of practice options with work in

various specializations and focus areas (Yael, 2022). It requires a loving heart and deserve for compassionate care. Nursing is one of the most wonderful arts, which requires blending of knowledge, skills and values (Campbell et.al, 2024).

Despite significant growth in the number of registered nurses and nursing education programs since the 1990s, the nurses continue to face challenges and a poor public reputation, largely due to traditional norms, beliefs, and gender role perceptions (Salem, 2019). The perception of the nursing profession affects the allocation of resources and the development of the field. Among nurses, self-image affects relationships with other professions. They are trying to gain public's trust in the health system. They are also facing problem of low pay and work overload, burnout, and work satisfaction (Salsali, 2014). According to a survey conducted by nurses Journal, the public perception of nurse has grown favorable since the pandemic. The survey found that 81% of all respondents hold a favorable opinion of nursing and nearly one in four people have researched information about health care carriers since the pandemic began. Another research was done in 2021 in India. During this research 391 people were surveyed and during the survey the general public strongly agreed on statement that: Nurses are back bone of patient care, nursing is the most respectful profession and nurses required tolerance towards this profession. People are uncertain about gender orientation in nursing profession and shift of duty put female nurses at risk (Reising, 2019). Society perceives nursing as a profession that provides essential nursing services for maintaining public health. Nurses are linked with society, which grants them the social responsibility to perform the different role. This relationship is based on trust, and society has major expectations from nursing professionals (Blau et al., 2017). Numerous studies have been done on how the public views the nursing profession in various nations, and the public believe that nurses has rapidly losing some of the key characteristics that have the profession to gain a positive reputation. The researchers were inspired to undertake the survey to see how the community views the nursing profession after reading several studies that indicated the public had unfavorable opinions of nurses and the nursing field.

1.2 Literature review

Nursing is an old art and new profession itself; however, the shortage of nurse is common, in one restricted or specific geographical location. Various people have different understanding of the nursing profession based on prior events in their lives since perception are subjective (Wang, et.al., 2021). According to the research done in USA on 2016 there is evidence of strong public trust, this does not generally appear to be born out of an understanding of nursing and impact; rather it appears to stem from the respect held for the traditional, more sentimental stereotypes of selfless, hardworking young females (Givin, et.al., 2016). Studies done in Spain in 2021 showed that society has propaganda about the functions performed by nursing professionals, which is based on myths and stereotypes. Nursing is a profoundly unknown and invisible profession, as society continues without recognizing its competence, autonomy, and independence (Verdugo & Blandon, 2021). In 2018, a non-probability convenience sampling strategy was employed in a cross-sectional descriptive correlation research design conducted in Saudi secondary schools. There are 150 pupils total, 75 of who are male and the remaining 75 are female. The current study found a statistically significant increase in the value that society places on nursing as a profession. The perceptions of Saudi secondary school students, whether male and female, toward a career in nursing are the same (Ahmed,2018). Research was done in 2020 in Saudi Arabia where it shows that half of the sample had knowledge score below 50 out of 100. Only 30% preferred to get nursing care by Saudis. The nursing profession was not viewed as respectful job as 70% would be ashamed of having a nurse in families (Hala et.al., 2020). A study in 2021 in found that Majority of the nursing students (79%) held positive attitudes towards the

nursing profession. Nursing was perceived as a poorly rewarded unpopular profession with bias towards recruitment and low payment (Numbe & Soita, 2023). The study found that most students joined the nursing faculty due to financial reasons or job availability. It concluded that after graduation, the majority preferred working in teaching institutions or bedside nursing (Yesuf & Abdu, 2023). A study by Denise (2008) in USA showed 70% of the public had positive perception towards nursing careers. Nursing was perceived as caring or compassion by 20% of RNs versus 16% of the public. The traditional norms and beliefs that depict nursing as a feminine role have also enormously contributed to the poor reputation (Salem.,2019). A study found that professional college teachers had excellent knowledge and attitudes toward the nursing profession (Janahi et al., 2018). A 2017 study by Abed and Elewa showed that the practice domain had the highest perception score among nurses, with a significant positive correlation between nurses' perception and their commitment to the nursing career, regardless of hospital sector. Grinberg and Sela (2022) reported a significant positive relationship between nurses' image perception and quality of care they provide. Meanwhile, Glerean et al. (2019) concluded public perceptions of the nursing profession are unrealistic.

1.3 Research Gap

The nurses were unable to change public perception about nursing. People have different subjective perception on understanding of the nursing based on prior events in their lives (Wang, et.al., 2021). The research done in the USA on 2016 showed strong public trust (Givin, et.al., 2016). Research was done in 2020 in Saudi Arabia where it shows that half of the sample had knowledge score below 50 out of 100. Only 32.5% preferred to get nursing care by Saudis. The nursing profession was not viewed as respectful job as 71.5% would be ashamed of living with nurse in family. There are socio-cultural barriers to pursue a nursing career including: gender-mixed working environment (35.9%), delayed marriage of female nurses (20.3%) and the negative perception of nursing on social life (64.5%) (Hala, et.al., 2020). This study might be helpful for providing feedback to the nursing profession. The results obtained from this research would be helpful to the institution for improving the public perception towards the nursing profession. A study was conducted in India in 2021 where 79% of people had positive image toward nursing profession (Sk & Joseph, 2021). The current study is particularly significant since it looks at public perceptions of the fundamental traits and principles that underpin the nursing profession as well as general knowledge of nursing. As a result, it could serve as the foundation for the expansion of current knowledge about the nursing profession.

1.4 Research Objective

The objective of the study was to identify the perception toward nursing profession among people residing in Pokhara, Kaski.

1.5 Research Question

What is the level of perception toward nursing profession among people residing in Pokhara, Kaski.

2. Materials and Methods

Descriptive Cross-sectional research design was used to assess the public perception towards nursing profession. The research was conducted in Pokhara municipality ward, 13. The populations were both male and female between aged group 30-60 years and residing in Pokhara, 13. Non-Probability purposive sampling technique was used to select sample for the

study. So, prevalence rate of 79% is expressed in decimal as based on prevalence rate, sample size was calculated. So, final sample size was 110.

A Structured interview schedule was used for data collection. The research instrument was developed by the researcher according to the objective of the study, literature review. The research instrument consists of two parts: Part I– Question related to socio demographic characteristics with 11. Part II - Question related to perception regarding nursing profession. The Likert scale format was used to explore the perception which consists of 30 statements (Grinberg & Sela, 2022). The scoring was based on respondent responses to the statement and reverse coding was done where (strongly Disagree=5, disagree=4, neutral=3, agree=2, strongly Agree=1). The validity of the tool was maintained by extensive literature review. Pilot study of the instruments was done in 10% (11 respondents) of total sample before finalizing the instrument to identify the accuracy, adequacy, and completeness. Pilot study was conducted in ward No- 12 of Pokhara Municipality. After pilot study, according to the need of the study, required modification was done.

2.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted only after getting approval letters from T.U. I.O.M. Pokhara Nursing Campus and from the ward chairperson of Pokhara Municipality ward 13. A written request letter from Pokhara Nursing Campus was submitted to Pokhara Municipality ward 13 to obtain formal permission for data collection. Permission was also being taken from the chairperson of ward. Data was collected in 2 weeks with maintaining confidentiality. The interview was conducted in separate rooms each day 8-10 were interviewed. Data were collected from 2024-01-28 to 2024-02-09. The data were checked, reviewed, and organized for accuracy and completeness. The data were analyzed based on research objectives and research questions. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze data. The Chi-square test was used to find out the association between perception and selected variables.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: *Background Information of Respondents*

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age (in years)		
30-49	53	48.2
50-60	57	51.8
Mean±SD(49.79±0.68)		
Gender		
Male	59	53.6
Female	51	46.4
Ethnicity		
Brahmin/Chhetri	66	60
Muslim	25	22.7
Janajati	12	10.9
Dalit	7	6.4
Religion		
Hinduism	68	61.8
Islam	26	23.6
Buddhism	16	14.6
Marital Status		
Married	76	69.1
Unmarried	16	14.5

Divorce/separated	10	9.1
Widow	8	7.3
Occupation		
Self-employed	37	33.6
Housemaker	27	24.5
Agriculture	21	19.1
Non-government service	18	16.4
Government service	4	3.6
Labor	3	2.8
Monthly Income		
20000-40000	16	14.5
40000-60000	73	66.4
60000-above	21	19.1
Educational Status		
Literate	102	92.7
Illiterate	8	7.3
Relatives in Nursing Field		
Yes	91	82.7
No	19	17.3
Relation with them(n=19)		
Far relatives	40	36.4
Daughter	29	26.4
Daughter In law	22	20
History of hospitalization		
Yes	78	70.9
No	32	29.1
Received Care by Nurse		
Yes	79	71.8
No	28	28.2

Table 1 revealed that among 110 respondents, (51.8%) Mean $\pm$ SD (49.79 $\pm$ 0.68707) of respondent were within the age of 50-60 years and the majority of the respondents were female. The minimum age was 33 and maximum was 59. Regarding ethnicity more than half of the ethnicity were Brahmin (60%) and majority (61.8%) followed Hindu religion.

Table 2: Respondents Perception toward Image of Nursing Profession

Statement	n=110				
	Strongly agree No (%)	Agree No (%)	Neutral No (%)	Disagree No (%)	Strongly Disagree No (%)
It is a respectful profession.	57(51.8)	53(48.2)	-	-	-
It is based on ethics standard.	13(11.8)	95(86.4)	-	2(1.8)	-
It is well appreciated profession in the society.	12(10.9)	95(86.4)	2(1.8)	1(.9)	-
It is a women profession*	12(10.9)	85(77.3)	4(3.6)	9(8.2)	-
	4(3.6)	31(28.2)	13(11.8)	58(52.7)	4(3.6)

It has bad societal image for male nurse*	8(7.3)	91(82.7)	2(1.8)	8(7.3)	1(.9)
It doesn't receive enough appreciation	12(10.9)	98(89.1)	-	-	-
	1(.9)	15(13.6)	5(4.5)	87(79.1)	2(1.8)
It is an essential profession in the society for humanity	-	1(.9)	2(1.8)	105(95.5)	2(1.8)
Nurses waste lots of time being busy and doing nothing*	3(2.7)	39(35.5)	6(5.5)	61(55.5)	1(0.9)
				12(10.9)	
Nurses take patient as a thing not human*	5(4.5)	87(79.1)	5(4.5)	11(10)	1(.9)
	37(33.6)	60(54.5)	2(1.8)		-
It has little chance of career development	-	2(1.8)	7(6.4)	92(83.6)	9(8.2)
				30(27.3)	
Nurses are equal to physician	3(2.7)	23(20.9)	53(53)		1(.9)
Nurses don't get paid well				87(79.1)	
	3(2.7)	11(10)	6(5.5)		3(2.7)
It is similar to that of servant*					
Nurses are well trained, but they seem to lack commitment to implement what they have been taught*					
Anyone could be nurse*					

*= Negative Statement

Table 2 shows respondent perception toward image of nursing profession. All of the respondents (100%) strongly agree with Nursing profession as a respectful profession and (97.3%) of respondents believed that Nursing profession is a well appreciated profession in the society.

Table 3: Respondents Perception towards the Professional Growth of Nurses

Statement	n=110				
	Strongly Agree No (%)	Agree No (%)	Neutral No (%)	Disagree No (%)	Strongly Disagree No (%)
Nurses make important contribution to patient care	45(40.9)	62(59.1)	-	-	-
I would like my child to become nurse.	21(19.1)	85(77.3)	1(.9)	2(1.8)	1(.9)
	13(11.8)	96(87.3)	1(.9)	-	-
Nursing profession have an					

opportunity for personal growth.	15(13.6)	95(86.4)	-	-	-
Nurses are good manager in health care providing organization.	18(16.4)	91(82.7)	-	-	1(0.9)
Nurses' participant should have to increase more for the development of good health policies	3(2.7)	27(24.5)	5(4.5)	74(67.3)	1(0.9)
Most of nurses are mean and don't care*	15(13.6)	85(77.3)	9(8.2)	-	1(0.9)
Will be bolder if male are enrolled					

*=Negative Statement

Table 3 Shows most (87.3%) of the respondents assumed that Nursing profession had an opportunity for personal growth. Likewise, greater than two third (67.3%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement addressing most nurses are don't care. Most (77.3%) of the respondents want their child to become a nurse. Similarly, (77.3%) of the affirmed that nursing profession would be bolder if males were enrolled.

Table 4: Respondents Perceptions towards the Characteristics of Nurses

Statement	Strongly Agree No (%)	Agree No (%)	Neutral No (%)	Disagree No (%)	Strongly Disagree No (%)
Nurses are good listeners to the patient's problem	18(16.4)	91(82.7)	-	1(0.9)	-
Nursing Profession is an independent where nurses can make decision	-	44 (40)	4 (3.6)	61 (55.5)	1 (0.9)
Nursing profession helps in promotion of health and prevention of illness	12 (10.9)	98 (89.1)	-	-	-
Nurses have lack of empathy and respect for human dignity*	1 (0.9)	45 (40.9)	3 (2.7)	60 (54.5)	1 (0.9)
Nurses explain poorly to patients' problem and later without clear understanding of theory condition and treatment*	2 (1.8)	33 (30)	6 (5.5)	68 (61.8)	1 (0.9)
Nurses obey doctors order without questioning them*	2 (1.8)	34 (30.9)	6 (5.5)	67 (60.9)	1 (0.9)
Nursing profession is a stimulating and challenging work	20 (18.2)	84 (76.4)	-	5 (4.5)	1 (0.9)
Nurses are good counsellor	59 (53.6)	51 (46.4)	-	-	-

*=Negative Statement

Table 4 shows most (89.1%) of the respondents agreed that nursing profession helps in promotion of health and prevention of illness and 82.1% believed that nurses are good listeners to identify the patient's problem. Likewise, majority (61.8%) of the respondents disagreed. That nurses explain poorly to patients' problem and later without clear understanding of theory condition and treatment. Similarly, more than half (60.9%) of the respondents disagreed that nurses obeyed doctors order without questioning them.

Table 5: Respondents Level of Perception towards Nursing Profession

n=110		
Level of perception	Number	Percent
Positive (≥ 68)	57	51.8
Negative (< 68)	53	48.2
Mean $\pm$ SD (68 $\pm$ 5.59)		

Table 5 Shows 51.8% had a positive perception and 48.2% had a negative perception regarding the nursing profession.

Table 6: Association of Level of Perception with Socio-demographic Variables

n=110				
Socio-demographic variables	Positive No (%)	Negative No (%)	Chi Square	p-value
Occupation				
Service	28(66.7)	14(33.3)	6.000	0.041#
Others	29(42.6)	39(57.4)		
Educational Status				
Literate	49(48)	53(52)	8.022	0.006 ^a #
Illiterate	8(100)	0(0)		

^a: Fisher

#: P value based on chi square test; p- value significant at < 0.005

Table 6 represent that there was a significant association between occupation and level of perception (p value < 0.041). Similarly, between the educational status and the level of perception (p value < 0.006).

4. Discussion

This aim of the study is to identify the level of perception towards nursing profession and to identify the association between the levels of perception towards nursing profession among the people. Nursing is an old profession; however, the shortage of nurses even in the present time.

The profession has been suffering from public stereotyping and from being closely associated with femininity and powerlessness. The time has never been better for nurses to reach out to the public to change certain perception about nursing. Various people have different understanding of the nursing profession based on prior events in their lives since perception are subjective (Wanget.al., 2021). On the basis of care and hospitalization majority (70.9) of the respondents had a history of hospitalization and had received care by nurses (71.8%). This study revealed that 51.8% had positive perception towards nursing profession and 48.2% had negative perception towards nursing profession. The finding is consistent with the study conducted in India by (Nageswor & Jabbari, 2018) where 60% had positive

knowledge towards nursing profession. Similarly, contradictory findings were obtained from the study conducted in Saudi Arabia by (Aedh, 2015) which revealed that 68% respondent had a positive perception with the role of nurse and 32% had negative perception and also a study done in South Africa by (Meiring, 2011) shows that 77% had a positive perception toward nursing profession and remaining had negative perception towards nursing profession. In this study respondent (91.8%) strongly disagree that nursing profession is similar to that of servant profession and (100%) agree that nursing profession has opportunity for professional growth and Nurses' participant should have to increase more for the development of good health policies (99.1%). Recent study done in Saudi Arabia by (Hala, et.al., 2020), which included over 700 participants of both genders, revealed that more than one-third of participants perceived nursing as a profession that was auxiliary and subservient to physicians, and therefore study participants claimed that there was no need for higher academic qualifications. The difference in finding might be due to difference in sample sized, type of instrument and different in setting.

Regarding respondents' perception towards image of nursing profession 100% perceive nursing as a respectful profession and is well appreciated profession in the society (86.4%). Most 82.7% perceived that nursing profession has not received enough appreciation, 98.2% perceived it as a caring profession with ethical standards. This is comparable to studies done in India by (Nagesworr & Jabbari, 2018), found that 97.08% perceived nursing as a respectful profession, 89.58% perceived that it did not received enough appreciation and 92.5% perceived it as a caring profession with ethical standards. Similarly, (Elfaki & Aedh, 2015) study found that 96.8% perceived nursing as a respectful profession, 76.1% perceived that it did not receive enough appreciation and 70.0% perceived it as a caring profession with ethical standards.

Regarding the participants perception towards professional growth of nurses in the present study is indicated that Nursing profession helped in promotion of health and prevention of illness (99.1%) and wanted their child to become a nurse (96.1%). Similarly, 88.2% reported that nursing is still viewed as a female oriented profession. A South African study by (Meiring, 2011) found a similar result, where 85% of the participants wanted their children to become a nurse and 87% of the sample saw a nursing career as a feminine profession.

Regarding the characteristics of nurse's study revealed that 82.7% revealed that nurses are good listeners of patient's problem and disagreed that nurse lacked empathy and respect for human dignity (55.4%). In contrast with the research done in Saudi by Ahmed (2018) showed that only 55% perceived that nurses are good listeners of patient problem and 75% agreed that nurse have lack empathy and respect for human dignity. The difference in the finding might be due to different in sample sizes.

Regarding the Academic background of the nurse's respondent stayed neutral in the statement that nurses are well trained but they seem to lack commitment to implement what they were taught (53%). The finding is inconsistent with the studies done in Belgium by Spouse, et.al., (2000) where 60% disagreed with this statement.

In this study there was a significant association between the occupation and level of perception (p value $< .041$), and similarity was so between the educational status and the level of perception (p value < 0.006). The finding of the study was inconsistent with the study conducted in India (Numbe & Soita, 2023). This discrepancy in the finding might be due to differences in sample techniques and measurement tools.

6. Conclusion and Rrecommendation

The finding of this research is addresses nursing profession recruitments. Positive perception of public towards nursing profession helps the public to gain better care and health

services. Based on the findings it is concluded that more than fifty percent public have positive perception about nursing profession. So, in order to upgrade the positive perception about nursing profession among public emphasis should be given in providing continuing a professional development programme, an active quality assurance programme and preceptor for the better client's outcome.

The finding of the study might be helpful to provide baseline information for further research related topic. It might help the researcher to conduct more scientific research studies with focus on increasing the number of samples among different community settings. This type of research can be done in a large scale to maintain generalizability. An interventional study can be done among public to evaluate the effectiveness of health education on knowledge regarding public perception.

7. Acknowledgement

It gives me great pleasure to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who provided direct or indirect assistance with the preparation of the research. I would like to express my gratitude to the administrative staff, library staff, and the ICT unit for their assistance, reference materials, and cooperation for the study.

The researcher would like to thank all the elders, those who offered advice, and everyone who contributed directly or indirectly to bringing this study to a fruitful conclusion.

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