**Original Article :**

# Community Perception towards the Nursing Profession in Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia

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**Abstract**

**Background and Aims:**
The shortage of nurses is a global issue, and negative perceptions of the nursing profession can contribute to low student interest in pursuing nursing as a career. This study aimed to investigate the perception of the nursing profession among the Al-Baha community in Saudi Arabia.

**Methods:**
A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in the Al-Baha region, with a sample size of 236 Saudi participants. Data were collected through a survey divided into three sections: demographic information, nursing knowledge, and opinion. The questionnaire was adapted from two previous studies. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program and presented in tables and figures.

**Results:**
Most participants had a positive attitude toward the nursing profession, and over half of them believed that Saudi nurses were better than non-Saudi nurses. The highest negative perception was among those who preferred female nurses over male nurses.

**Conclusions:**
The majority of participants in the Al-Baha community had a positive view of the nursing profession, particularly among those who preferred male nurses, those over 50 years old, and those who preferred Saudi nurses. These findings have implications for nursing recruitment and retention in Al-Baha and Saudi Arabia.

**Keywords:**
Community, Perception, Nursing Profession, Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia.

## Introduction

Nursing shortages are a worldwide issue, and negative perceptions of nursing can dissuade new graduates from pursuing the profession, which can also impact the mental health of current nurses [1]. In addition to perceptions, community satisfaction is also important in the success of any profession, including power plant development. When communities are satisfied with the services provided, they are more likely to continue to support their profession [2]. This can lead to increased efficiency and profitability for power plant developers. Overall, community opinion, perception, and satisfaction are critical factors in the success of any profession, particularly those that have a significant impact on the local community, such as power plant development. By prioritizing community input and feedback, professionals can help ensure the long-term success and sustainability of their work [3].

In a previous study by Hala Elmorshedy, a lack of knowledge about the nursing profession were identified [4]. In contrast, Hala Saied found that the Saudi community's perception of the nursing profession was becoming more positive[5]. These studies were conducted in the Riyadh region, but no studies on the perception of nursing in the Al Baha region have been conducted[4,5].

Improving the public image of nursing is a crucial step towards attracting more individuals to the nursing profession. One way to achieve this is by empowering nursing education and enhancing the workplace environment, creating an atmosphere that motivates nurses to advocate for their profession [6]. This can be accomplished through various means, such as offering continuing education opportunities, promoting research and innovation, and fostering a culture of teamwork and collaboration. Furthermore, it is essential to encourage nurses to take on higher executive positions, such as managers, educators, or clinicians. Nurses possess unique skills and knowledge that can greatly benefit the healthcare industry, and by taking on leadership roles, they can help shape policies and practices that improve patient outcomes and the overall image of nursing. This can also provide nurses with opportunities to use their expertise to mentor and inspire future generations of nurses, leading to a more positive perception of the nursing profession [5]. Nurses represent the majority of the healthcare industry, advocating for patients and providing highly skilled care [7].

To date, there has been a lack of research conducted on the community's perception of the nursing profession in the Al Baha region. Therefore, the primary objective

of this study is to assess the community's perception towards nursing as a profession in Al-Baha District. The study seeks to identify the factors that influence the perception of the nursing profession in the region, as understanding these factors can contribute to developing strategies to improve the image of nursing and attract more individuals to the profession. By exploring the community's perception, this study aims to provide insight into potential barriers or misconceptions that need to be addressed to ensure the continued growth and success of the nursing profession in Al-Baha region.

## Methods

*Study Design:*

This study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional design to assess the community's perception of the nursing profession in Al-Baha district [8].

*Study Setting:*

The research was conducted in Al-Baha district, which is located in the southwestern region of Saudi Arabia and has a population of approximately 500,000 people (General Authority for Statisitics Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2017).

*Study Population:*

The study population included individuals who live in Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia, and met the inclusion criteria. In order to be eligible for the study, participants had to have lived in Al-Baha for the previous five years, be between the ages of 17 and 45, be Saudi nationals, and be educated. The exclusion criteria were anyone who had no knowledge of nursing, or those worked as a nurse.

*Sampling Technique:*

In this study, the researchers used a random number generator to select participants from the Al-Baha community, which ensured that the sample was representative of the population. By using this sampling technique, the researchers were able to minimize bias and increase the generalizability of the study findings to the larger population.

*Sample Size:*

The sample size was determined based on the available data on the topic and the region. The calculation of sample size was as follow:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + Ne^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{30000000}{(1+30000000*0.05^2)} = 399 \text{ individuals.}$$

Where: n= desired sample size,
N= estimated total population (30,000,000),
e=margin error (0.05).

There were 236 participants responded to the distributed questionnaire.

*Data collection:*

An online, validated questionnaire was used to collect data, which was divided into three sections. Section One collected demographic information such as age, gender, level of education, and whether or not they had a family member who worked as a nurse. Section Two assessed the participants' nursing knowledge, and Section Three measured their opinions of the nursing profession. The online questionnire was distriibuted through social media (Whatsapp, twiter) to friends and relatives. The reponses were received in an Excel sheet and then transferred to SPSS program for analysis.

*Testing Instrument:*

The questionnaire was adapted from two previous studies conducted by Hala Elmorshedy and Hala Saied 4,5 and was tested among 10 participants to evaluate its validity. The pilot study participants were excluded from the final study sample. The reliability of the instrument was ensured by using Cronbach's Alpha test at an acceptable level.

*Data analysis:*

Data collected from the questionnaire was categorized and coded, then analyzed using appropriate statistical methods in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the study variables such as frequency, percentages, and means. Cross tabulation was applied to test relationships between demographic variables and community perceptions, such as age, gender, level of education, and whether or not they have a nurse in their family. The results of the data analysis were used to draw conclusions about the community's perception towards nursing as a profession in Al-Baha District and the factors affecting their perception.

*Ethical Consideration:*

The study was approved by the nursing department at AL Baha University for approval, and all participants provided informed consent to participate in the study. The participants had agreed to participate in the study.

**Results:**

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants from the Al-Baha region who took part in the study. The results show that the majority of the participants were between the ages of 20 and 29 years (39.8%) and over 40 years (36.1%). In terms of gender, 63.6% of the participants were male and 36.4% were female. The marital status of the participants revealed that 49.6% were single, 48.3% were married, and only 2.1% were divorced. In terms of educational level, 39.4% of the

participants had completed university education, while 50.8% had education beyond university level. The preference of the community towards nurse gender was also examined, with the results indicating that 26.3% of the participants preferred male nurses and 21.2% preferred female nurses, while 52.5% had no preference. The majority of the participants (57.6%) preferred Saudi nurses, while only 8.1% preferred non-Saudi nurses, and 34.3% had no preference. These findings provide valuable insights into the preferences and expectations of the community regarding nursing professionals in the Al-Baha region.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants (n=236),

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Age | | |
| 17-19 years | 28 | 11.9 |
| 20-29 years | 94 | 39.8 |
| 30-39 years | 29 | 12.3 |
| 40-49 years | 49 | 20.8 |
| 50 years or more | 36 | 15.3 |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 150 | 63.6 |
| Female | 86 | 36.4 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 117 | 49.6 |
| Married | 114 | 48.3 |
| Divorced | 5 | 2.1 |
| Education | | |
| Secondary School | 23 | 9.7 |
| University | 93 | 39.4 |
| Postgraduate | 120 | 50.8 |
| Preferences based on gender | | |
| Male nurse | 62 | 26.3 |
| Female nurse | 50 | 21.2 |
| Both | 124 | 52.5 |
| Preferences based on nationality | | |
| Saudi Nurse | 136 | 57.6 |
| Non-Saudi Nurse | 19 | 8.1 |
| Both | 81 | 34.3 |

Table 2 displays the community's knowledge of the nursing profession, with the majority rating nursing care as very good (37.7%), excellent (28.8%), and good (25.4%). All participants agreed that the nurse's duty is to provide medical care and follow up with health education. About half of the participants (50.8%) were aware that

nursing takes five years to complete for a bachelor's degree, while 30.1% did not know the length of the nursing study period. The majority of participants (76.7%) believed that the nursing profession had a variety of specialties.

Table 2: Community knowledge on nursing profession (n=236).

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Rate of nursing care | | |
| Poor | 19 | 8.1 |
| Good | 60 | 25.4 |
| Very good | 89 | 37.7 |
| Excellent | 68 | 28.8 |
| Nurse duties | | |
| Provide medical care, follow-up and health education | 236 | 100.0 |
| Nursing study period | | |
| Four years | 45 | 19.1 |
| Five years | 120 | 50.8 |
| I don't know | 71 | 30.1 |
| Nursing has specialties | | |
| Yes | 181 | 76.7 |
| No | 6 | 2.5 |
| I do not know | 49 | 20.8 |

Figure 1 illustrates that the overall community perception level of the nursing profession in the Al-Baha region was positive, with 94% of participants expressing a positive perception.

Table 3 provides details on the community

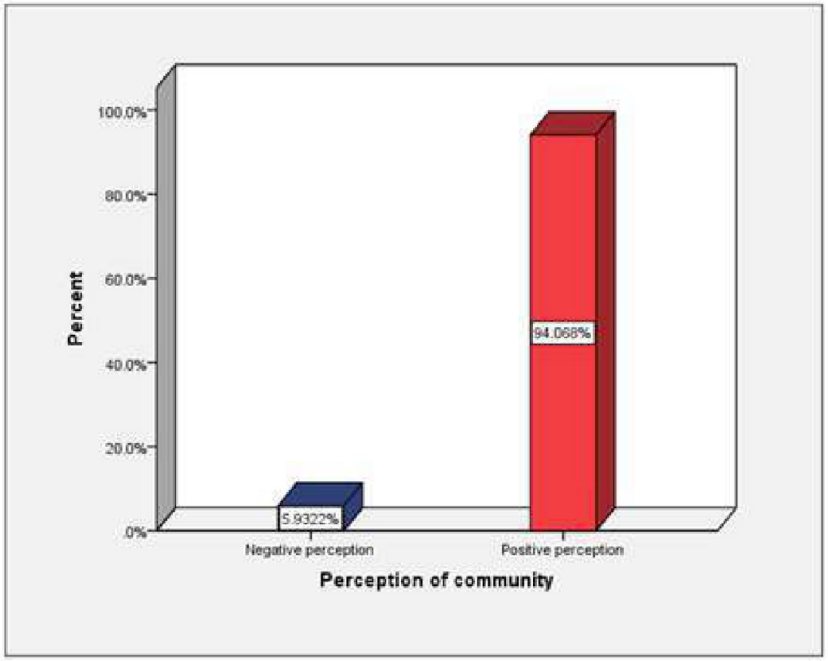



Figure 1

perception towards the nursing profession. The nature of the nursing profession was strongly agreed upon and agreed upon, while the social value and characteristics and the role of the nurse were strongly disagreed upon. Participants showed a positive response towards choosing nursing as a profession, with strong agreement and agreement.

Table 3: The community perception towards nursing profession in Al-Baha region, related to the perception about the nature of the nursing profession, Social Value and the Role Characteristics, Perception about Choosing Nursing as Profession (n=236).

| Responses related to the perception about the nature of the nursing profession | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| Does nurses respect work ethics? | 36.9 | 39.4 | 18.6 | 3.8 | 1.3 |
| Do you think the nursing profession is important to any society? | 70.3 | 23.7 | 3.8 | 1.7 | 0.4 |
| Do you think nursing is a dangerous profession? | 16.1 | 33.5 | 25.4 | 16.9 | 8.1 |
| Does nurse obey doctor's orders without questioning them? | 15.3 | 37.3 | 24.2 | 15.3 | 8.1 |
| is the nursing profession important in patient recovery? | 42.4 | 45.3 | 6.4 | 4.7 | 1.3 |
| Does the nursing profession promotes health and prevents disease? | 63.1 | 28.0 | 7.6 | 0.8 | 0.4 |
| Does certain education and legal license is required to practice as a nurse? | 50.8 | 41.1 | 4.7 | 2.1 | 1.3 |
| The Social Value and the Role Characteristics of Nursing Profession | | | | | |
| Item | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| Does Al-Baha society appreciate nurses work? | 34.3 | 41.1 | 13.6 | 7.6 | 3.4 |
| Does the nursing profession is seen by Al-Baha as a servant's job? | 5.1 | 8.1 | 11.4 | 22.5 | 53.0 |
| Does the nursing profession conflict with the customs and traditions of Al-Baha? | 7.2 | 9.3 | 23.3 | 28.0 | 32.2 |
| Do you think nursing is a female profession only? | 3.4 | 8.1 | 9.3 | 28.8 | 50.4 |
| Nursing profession affects social life? | 6.4 | 3.8 | 12.7 | 22.5 | 54.7 |
| Would you be ashamed to have a nurse in your family? | 11.9 | 18.6 | 25.0 | 24.2 | 20.3 |

| Perception about Choosing Nursing as Profession | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| Would you recommend a carrier in nursing for Saudi females? | 37.7 | 37.7 | 15.7 | 3.4 | 5.5 |
| Would you recommend a carrier in nursing for Saudi males? | 46.6 | 37.7 | 11.0 | 3.0 | 1.7 |
| Could you allow your daughter, sister, or any of my relatives to be a nurse? | 41.5 | 31.4 | 14.4 | 4.2 | 8.5 |
| Can you as a choose nursing as profession? | 47.9 | 34.3 | 11.0 | 2.5 | 4.2 |
| Overall perception | | | Mean ±SD | | (70±6.9) |

Table 4 examines the relationship between the demographics and characteristics of the participants and their community perception towards the nursing profession. The marital status of the participants and their preference for gender-based nurses were significant factors that influenced the level of community perception. The highest negative perception was observed in those who preferred female nurses over male nurses, while the highest positive perception was seen in people over 50 years old, males more than females, and those who preferred non-Saudi nurses over Saudi nurses.

Table 4: Relationships between the demographics and characteristics of the participants and community perception towards nursing profession (n=236).

| Variables | Negative perception | Positive perception | P-Value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | | | |
| 17-19 years | 7.1% | 92.9% | 0.8 |
| 20-29 years | 5.3% | 94.7% | |
| 30-39 years | 6.9% | 93.1% | |
| 40-49 years | 8.2% | 91.8% | |
| 50 years or more | 2.8% | 97.2% | |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 5.3% | 94.7% | 0.6 |
| Female | 7.0% | 93.0% | |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Single | 9.4% | 90.6% | 0.02* |
| Married | 2.6% | 97.4% | |
| Divorced | 0.0% | 100.0% | |
| Education | | | |
| Secondary School | 0.0% | 100.0% | 0.24 |
| University | 8.6% | 91.4% | |
| Postgraduate | 5.0% | 95.0% | |

| Variables | Negative perception | Positive perception | P-Value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Preferences based on gender | | | |
| Male nurse | 0.0% | 100.0% | 0.026* |
| Female nurse | 12.0% | 88.0% | |
| Both | 6.5% | 93.5% | |
| Preferences based on nationality | | | |
| Saudi Nurse | 5.9% | 94.1% | 0.7 |
| Non-Saudi Nurse | 0.0% | 100.0% | |
| Both | 7.4% | 92.6% | |

significant :(*)

## Discussion

The majority of participants in this study had a positive perception of nursing and considered it to be very good or excellent. Additionally, most participants agreed that nurses respect work ethics and are important to society. These findings suggest that the image of nursing has changed positively in recent years. The study showed positive perception towards nursing profession which indicated that they might support the profession and direct their kids to join the nursing colleges.

This result is in contrast to previous studies that revealed a negative perception of nursing in Saudi Arabia [4]. However, it is consistent with a recent study that found a shift toward a more positive view [5] and similar to findings reported in the preprint version of the community perception toward nursing in Arabic countries [9] and with another previous study investigated nursing students' attitudes on their future profession in Saudi Arabia, it reflected that they pose a good attitude on the profession[10].

Participants who preferred female nurses over male nurses had the highest negative perception, while those over 50 years had higher positive perception compared to others, as did those who preferred male nurses over female nurses and those who preferred non-Saudi nurses over Saudi nurses. These findings may suggest that personal preferences and biases influence perceptions of nursing.

The main limitation of this study is its limited scope, as it was only conducted in the Al-Baha region. Additionally, the majority of participants were relatives and friends of the researchers, which may have introduced bias into the results. Further research in different regions and with a larger sample size is recommended to further analyze and collect data on the perception of Saudi Arabian community towards the nursing.

In conclusion, this study suggests that the majority of participants from the Al-Baha community had a positive perception of the nursing profession. However, personal

preferences and biases may influence perceptions of nursing. Increasing community knowledge about nursing as a profession and its importance to society may help to address the shortage of nurses worldwide.

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Conflicts of interest:

We would like to confirm that there are no financial and personal relationships with other people or organizations that could inappropriately affect our work. We also would like to assure that we have no conflicts of interest related to publication of this study.

**Ethical approval**

The study was approved by Research Ethical Committee of Nursing Department, Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences, Albaha University, Saudi Arabia in February, 2022.

**Authors' contribution:**

All authors participated in this study, WAMA is the supervisor and WASA is the co-supervisor of the students while (AA, FA, SA, SA, and MA) are the students who conducted the project, they preparing the tools of data collection and designing the work. They also worked in drafting, revising the manuscript and finally approved the manuscript before submission. They also consent for their agreement on all aspect of work and accuracy of the work. WAMA and WASA prepared the article for publication with participation with other authors.

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