



## Dreams and disappointments regarding nursing: Student nurses' reasons for attrition and retention. A qualitative study design



Yvonne ten Hoeve<sup>a,\*</sup>, Stynke Castelein<sup>b</sup>, Gerard Jansen<sup>c</sup>, Petrie Roodbol<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of Groningen, University Medical Center Groningen, School of Nursing & Health, P.O. Box 30.001, 9700 RB Groningen, The Netherlands

<sup>b</sup> Lentis Research, Lentis Psychiatric Institute, P.O. Box 86, 9700 AB Groningen, The Netherlands

<sup>c</sup> Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, Master Advanced Nursing Practice, Eyssonusplein 18, 9714 CE Groningen, The Netherlands

<sup>d</sup> University of Groningen, University Medical Center Groningen, P.O. Box 30.001, 9700 RB Groningen, The Netherlands

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

Attrition  
Career choice  
Clinical placement  
Conceptualization of nursing  
Education  
Retention  
Team

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** In the Netherlands, hundreds of students register annually for a nursing programme, but not all of these students manage to complete their training.

**Objective:** The main aim of this study was to examine which factors affect student nurses' decision to leave or complete their programme.

**Theoretical framework:** The study used an exploratory descriptive design, employing a qualitative phenomenological approach.

**Sample:** Student nurses ( $n = 17$ ) at the beginning of their third year of the four-year Bachelor's programme.

**Data collection:** Data were collected at four Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, from December 2013 to January 2014. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data, using an interview guide.

**Results:** The main reasons for students to become nurses were the caring aspect, personal experiences with healthcare, role models in their immediate environment, and job opportunities. They had both altruistic and professional perceptions of their profession. Reasons for attrition were strongly related to the training programme and to their clinical placements, in particular the perceived lack of support from mentors and team. Feelings of being welcomed and working in a nice team proved to be more important reasons for completing the programme than the specific clinical field.

**Conclusions:** Student nurses started their studies with many dreams, such as caring for people and having the opportunity to deliver excellent nursing care. When their expectations were not met, their dreams became disappointments which caused them to consider stopping and even to leave (attrition). The role of lecturers and mentors seems invaluable in protecting and guiding students through their programme and placements. Optimal cooperation between lecturers and mentors is of paramount importance to retain student nurses in their training programmes.

### 1. Introduction

Student attrition from nursing programmes has been a long-standing problem and is a major issue globally (Cameron et al., 2011a; Glossop, 2001; Hamshire et al., 2013). Glossop defines attrition as 'the difference between the numbers of students beginning each cohort and the numbers who completed that cohort' (Glossop, 2002, p. 377). Attrition from nursing programmes is not only a threat to the future nursing workforce, but it is also costly. The literature suggests that there is often a discrepancy between the expectations that beginner nursing students have of their training programmes and the nursing profession, and what they actually encounter during their studies and

practice (Last and Fulbrook, 2003; O'Donnell, 2011). This difference between expectation and practice is often at the root of students' premature attrition. The social context of nursing students consists mainly of their learning and work environment. Interaction with peers and mentors, both at school and in practice, forms an essential part of their professional development (Bowden, 2008; Williams, 2010). These interactions can affect their decision to leave or stay in their programmes. Previous studies showed that nursing students demonstrate a wide range of pre-existing perceptions of nursing. Despite this variety, most students consider nurses to have caring and compassionate qualities (Mooney et al., 2008; Newton et al., 2009). In addition to the caring aspect, students choose nursing for various other reasons,

\* Corresponding author at: University of Groningen, UMCG School of Nursing and Health, University Medical Center Groningen, P.O. Box 30.001/FC 14, 9700 RB Groningen, The Netherlands.

E-mail addresses: [y.ten.hoeve@umcg.nl](mailto:y.ten.hoeve@umcg.nl) (Y. ten Hoeve), [s.castelein@lentis.nl](mailto:s.castelein@lentis.nl) (S. Castelein), [gr.jansen@pl.hanze.nl](mailto:gr.jansen@pl.hanze.nl) (G. Jansen), [p.f.roodbol@umcg.nl](mailto:p.f.roodbol@umcg.nl) (P. Roodbol).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2017.04.013>

Received 3 November 2016; Received in revised form 7 March 2017; Accepted 13 April 2017

0260-6917/© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

such as the strong desire to become a nurse, and job possibilities (McLaughlin et al., 2010; Wilkes et al., 2015).

There is a relatively high dropout rate in degree programmes which are chosen because of career, status or salary expectations. Failure is much less likely among students who were intrinsically motivated and chose their programme because of its content. Intrinsic motivation appears to play a considerable role in study success. Students with high intrinsic motivation perform better and respond better to changes. Ryan & Deci define intrinsic motivation as ‘the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence’ (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 56). The social contexts in which people are embedded may influence positive motivation and enhance performance and well-being. When intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are not satisfied in the learning and/or work environment, this may lead to disappointment, dissatisfaction, and finally to voluntary withdrawal.

In the Netherlands, hundreds of students register annually for a nursing programme at universities of applied sciences. Unfortunately, not all of these students manage to complete their programme. University reports indicate that attrition is most common during the first or second year of their studies (the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences; Vereniging Hogescholen, 2016). There is little robust information about why Dutch nursing students consider leaving their pre-registration nursing programmes. The purpose of this study is to explore, from a qualitative perspective, the intrinsic and extrinsic factors which may affect nursing students' decisions to leave or complete their course.

## 2. Objectives

The aim of this study was 1) to determine why students choose a career in nursing, 2) to improve our understanding of student nurses' conceptualization of nursing, and 3) to examine both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence their decision to leave or complete their programme.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Research Team and Reflexivity

It is vital that interviewers are able to understand the participants' views and terminology (Pope and Mays, 2006). Therefore, four student nurses, in pairs of two, performed the interviews as part of their graduation project in a Bachelor's programme in nursing. Prior to conducting the interviews, they received interview training from an expert, and after high consensus rates of the interviews they were allowed to perform the interviews in pairs of two. Two researchers (YtH and CdJ) continuously supervised the interview process, and students and supervising researchers did not have a previous relationship with the participant prior to study commencement.

### 3.2. Theoretical Framework

The study used an exploratory descriptive design, employing a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and the phenomenological method was used to analyze the participants' experience of completing a Bachelor's of nursing programme. Phenomenology tends to look at data thematically to extract essences and essentials of participant meanings (Miles et al., 2014, p. 8).

### 3.3. Sampling

This study follows up an earlier survey about nursing students' orientation and attitudes towards nursing (Ten Hoeve et al., 2016a,b). The survey took place at four Universities of Applied Sciences in the north, the south and the center of the Netherlands, in order to ensure a representative geographical and demographical distribution. The stu-

dents who participated in this survey were also asked, by means of closed questions, whether they ever considered withdrawing from the programme, and their reasons for withdrawal. Subsequently, students who had considered withdrawing but remained were asked what their motivations were for continuing. In order to gain more insight into these relevant topics, the researchers asked the Deans and Faculty Boards of the four universities to give their permission for this qualitative follow-up study. After permission was obtained, the researchers provided the schools with the identification numbers of students they would like to interview. A purposive sampling method was used based on the results of the quantitative survey: 1. students who never considered stopping, 2. students who considered stopping, but continued and 3. students who stopped. The Deans approached the students by e-mail with the invitation to participate. Initially, twelve students responded positively. In order to obtain saturation we asked the Deans to approach the students a second time. Finally, we included seventeen students after saturation was reached. Of the participants ( $n = 17$ ), eight students never considered stopping, seven considered stopping, but continued, and two withdrew from their programme.

### 3.4. Setting

With participants who expressed an interest in and willingness to participate, appointments for the interviews were made based on their availability. Interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the participants. During each interview, only the participant and two interviewers were present.

### 3.5. Data Collection

Data were collected from December 2013–January 2014, when participants were in their third year of the four-year Bachelor's programme. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data, using an interview guide (Appendix A). The interviews were semi-structured, because each participant was asked a set of similar, non-identical questions, depending on the group they belonged to. Especially, since the interviews were conducted by students in pairs of two, an interview guide and instructions on how to use it, was essential. The topics for this guide were derived from the quantitative survey and they were used to gain more insight into nursing students' motivation to choose a career in nursing, their views on training and clinical placements, and their perceptions of nursing. At the beginning of the interview the participants signed a consent form, after being informed about the purpose and confidentiality of the study, and that participation was on a voluntary basis. All interviews were audiotaped, no field notes were made during or after the interviews. The duration of the interviews averaged 45 min and data saturation was discussed after each interview. The audiotaped interviews were transcribed verbatim and anonymity was guaranteed by removing the association between the identifying dataset and the data subjects.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

The transcripts were cross-checked for quality by the researchers before they were imported to Atlas.ti software programme (Friese, 2014). Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Recurrent phrases were coded and codes with similar elements were merged to form into subthemes. Both thematic coding (topics from the interview guide) and open coding (themes derived from the data) were used. The researchers then discussed and compared their generated codes and subthemes. Subthemes were further clustered for areas of commonality to form into themes.

### 3.7. Analysis of Differences Between Groups

To explore if there were differences between the subgroups with

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4940716>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4940716>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)