Gender-Related Barriers and Image in Nursing: Predictors of Caring Behavior among Male Nursing Students

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Background

● Previous studies highlighted that male nurses face many gender-role strains in the current nursing environment.

● These challenges result decreased self-worth, self-esteem, image, and professional growth in male nursing students.

● Gender-related barriers may also impact the vital relationship between professional image and caring behaviors.

Purpose

We examined the relationships among nursing students' perceived nursing image, caring behaviors, and gender-friendly barriers to determine whether gender-friendly barriers affect nursing image and caring behavior among male nursing students.

Methods

We employed a quantitative research design with 141 male students (mean age = 21.39 years, standard deviation = 1.32) who had obtained at least 1 month of clinical practice experience. We collected data using three instruments: The Caring Assessment Report Evaluation Q-sort (CARE-Q), Gender-friendliness Barriers in Nursing Programs (GFB-NP), and Nursing Image–as a Profession questionnaire (NIPQ). Data were collected from August 2016 to July 2017. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with bootstrapping was used to test the hypotheses model.

Results

The full model results indicated a direct positive and significant path from professional image to caring behaviour ($\beta = 0.47$, $t = 9.66$). Barriers were significantly negatively correlated with professional image ($\beta = -0.31$, $t = 4.77$) and caring behaviour ($\beta = -0.18$, $t = 3.12$). In addition, the path coefficient of an interaction construct (nursing professional image × gender-friendly barriers) to predict caring behaviour was -.043 for the interaction, which was negative and significant ($t = 2.13$).

Table Descriptive Statistics and Factor Loadings for the Measurement Model

Latent Variable	Mean	SD	Loading
Caring			
Sense of security	66.36	7.31	0.94
Comfort	63.90	7.47	0.95
Accessibility	32.93	4.12	0.94
Image/perception			
Description of the profession	24.46	3.28	0.86
Society's view	16.04	2.20	0.81
Benefits of the profession	31.50	4.02	0.81
Self-satisfaction in nursing	13.01	2.20	0.67
Gender-friendly barriers			
Barriers to belonging	66.36	7.31	0.81
Barriers to clinical practice	63.90	7.47	0.85
Course-related barriers	32.93	4.12	0.85

Conclusion

Male nursing students perceived that professional nursing image directly affected caring behaviours. In addition, students perceived that gender-friendly barriers moderate the relationship between professional image and caring behaviour. This has implications for nursing education, where the goal should be to improve male nursing students' caring behaviours and image and decrease gender-friendly barriers, which can be accomplished by more effective clinical practice design.