

Original Article

Investigation of the Relationship between their Self-Actualization Obstacle and Career Choice of Nursing Student

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Abstract

Background: It should be supported self-actualization of nursing students during nursing education.

Aim: The study aimed to investigate the relationship between their self-actualization obstacles and career choices of nursing students.

Methods: The study was conducted at a university in Erzurum, Turkey, with 1130 students. Data collection tools included a questionnaire form, Self-Actualization Obstacles Screening Inventory (SAOSI), and Career Choice Scale for Nursing (CCSN).

Results: In the study, the mean SAOSI score was determined to be 95.22 ± 38.94 , and the mean CCSN score was found to be 97.66 ± 25.66 . Although there was a statistically significant and positive correlation between total CCSN score and total SAOSI score and the need for security and respect sub-scales ($p < 0.05$), there was no statistically significant correlation between the CCSN and the physiological needs and belonging-love sub-scales ($p > 0.05$). Conclusion: Their career choices have increases when the self-actualization obstacles of the students decrease.

Key words: self-actualization, career choice, nursing, students

Introduction

Self-actualization is the term used to define the modern psychological concept which was first coined by Kurt Goldstein and then developed by Maslow (Goldstein, 1934; Maslow 1943). Maslow indicates that few people will ever fully reach this level. Self-actualized individuals are spontaneous, are problem-centered, have an increased perception of reality, and are autonomous (Maslow 1943). In recent years, for example, Maslow's hierarchy of needs has generated growing research (Saeednia, 2011; Wang, Chen, & Chen, 2016, Wei, Xie, & Hong, 2016). Self-actualization is one of the fundamental functions of a human being and involves achieving personal goals and realizing personal potential, as well as self-fulfillment, personal achievement, and scientific discoveries (Birol, 2009; Kuzgun, 1972). Issues encountered when attempting to satisfy the needs that emerge during the progress through the steps of self-

actualization are referred to as self-actualization obstacles (Akkoyun, 1988).

Nursing has been affected by scientific and technological developments throughout its history (Bayık et al., 2002; Kaya, 2002). These developments have forced nurses to adopt a more professional role, whereby they must constantly improve both personally and professionally, undertake responsibilities, produce solutions to problems through research, and have leadership skills and the ability to establish strong interpersonal relationships (Kaya, 2003). The qualities required from nurses indicate the importance of their arrival at the self-actualization step of the hierarchy of needs (Kaya, 2003).

In a developed country, the most important development step an independent individual can take is choosing their own profession. For an individual to make the right choice about their

profession, they should primarily be aware of what they desire and the facilities they possess to reach this desire. They then need to explore their choices and evaluate the extent to which these choices best suit them (Ozoglu, 1997; Mooney et al., 2008). Career choice is an individual's preference towards the profession that they believe best suits their personality. Professional success is closely related to the individuals' physical characteristics, their knowledge and voluntary choice of preference and their mental preparedness for the profession (Mooney et al., 2008; Önler et al., 2010; Ozcan, 2006; Citak et al., 2010). There is a relationship between an individual's self-actualization and professional success. Excellent practitioners of the nursing profession are required to further improve the nursing field. Therefore, individuals who consider taking up nursing as a profession should know the field well and be devoted to the professional practices of nursing (Kaya et al., 2004; Karakus et al., 2005; Andsoy et al., 2012). Nurses' arrival to and maintenance of their position at the self-actualization step are of great importance for their personal and professional motivations. A review of the relevant scientific literature showed that numerous studies focusing on self-actualization obstacles and career choice in nursing have been conducted ((Kuzgun, 1972; Akkoyun, 1988; Kuzgun, 1973; Ayten, 2005; Ertem et al., 2004; Erden Imamoglu, 2013; Hofman, 2001; Kaya et al., 2004; Karakus et al., 2005; Altun, 2003; Ciftcii et al., 2011; Karakus et al., 2005; Erbil et al., 2008; Lai et al., 2008; Zysberg et al., 2005; Cassel et al., 2009). However, there were no studies were found addressing the self-actualization obstacles and career choices of nursing students together. The study aims to determine the relationship between their self-actualization obstacles and career choices of nursing students in Turkey.

Research questions

- What is the level of nursing students' self-actualization obstacles?
- What is the level of nursing students' career choices?
- Is there any relationship between self-actualization obstacles and career choices of nursing students?

Method

The study was descriptive and correlational in design, it was conducted at a university in

Erzurum, Turkey. The study population was made up of 1130 nursing students who were studying at a university in Erzurum, Turkey during the spring semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. Nursing students volunteered to participate in this study and were accessible during data collection. The study population consisted of 824 nursing students.

Data collection: The personal information form was administered to obtain descriptive qualities for participating nursing students. The Self-Actualization Obstacles Screening Inventory (SAOSI) was used to determine nursing students' self-actualization obstacles and The Career Choice Scale for Nursing (CCSN) was used to determine nursing students' career choices. Data collection forms were distributed to students who were asked to return the forms to researchers after they had completed them. The students completed the data collection forms in 30-35 minutes.

Measurements

Descriptive Questionnaire Form: We used a questionnaire about sociodemographic characteristics consisting of 11 questions regarding characteristics including age, gender, living situation, education, marital status.

Self-Actualization Obstacles Screening Inventory (SAOSI): The scale was developed by Akkoyun. 1988. It consists of 4 subtests and 139 items (Akkoyun 1988). The items of SAOSI are expressed on a 3-point likert type scoring scale. It is desirable to select and mark one of the yes, no and 'partially options for each item. Yes response is given as 2, partly as, no points are awarded for no response. The highest total score is 278. It was accepted that the highest score of the subtest showed the individual's needs in that subject (Akkoyun 1988).

Career Choice Scale for Nursing (CCSN): The scale was developed by Zysberg and Berry (Zysberg and Berry, 2005). The reliability of the scale was validated in by Önler and Saraçoğlu in Turkey (Önler and Saraçoğlu, 2005). Total scale and subscale scores; by dividing the sum of the scores the participants gave to the scale into the number of questions in the measure. According to scores on the scale, the factors affecting the selection of nursing profession in terms of independent variables are compared. The Cronbach Alpha values for the subscales of occupational suitability and vital causes of the original scale are .86 and .78. (Önler and Saraçoğlu, 2005).

Data analysis: Data analysis was done using the SPSS Statistics version 17.0 program. Mean and standard deviation values were used for the levels of the students' self-actualization obstacles and career choices. Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between students' self-actualization obstacles and career choices. Reliability using Cronbach's alpha internal consistency test was measured.

Ethical considerations: Approval for the study was obtained with written permission from the faculty. The research conforms to the provisions of the Declaration of Helsinki (as revised in Brazil 2013). The Institutional Ethics Committee of Ataturk University Faculty of Health Sciences (09.11.2015/13) approved this study before implementation. Nursing students were informed about the aims and methods of the study. They were told that their participation was completely voluntary and that they would be able to withdraw from the study at any time.

Results

This section presents the data regarding the distribution of responses on the introductory information provided by the 824 nursing undergraduates and the distribution of their scores on the Self-actualization Obstacles Screening Inventory and the Career Choice Scale for Nursing. The distribution of the descriptive characteristics of the students showed that 75.6% were female, 25.8% were first-year students, 30.7% were sophomore students, 30.3% were junior students, and 13.1% were senior students. Moreover, 58.9% of the students were living in the city center, 57.4% of the students were living in state-funded dormitories, 98.2% of the students were unmarried, 49.3% of the students were Anatolian high school graduates, 46.2% of the students participated in leisure time activities as spectators, the mean age of the students was 20.17 ± 1.68 and the mean number of their siblings was 3.69 ± 2.45 (Table 1). The mean score obtained on the Self-Actualization Obstacles Screening Inventory was 95.22 ± 38.94 , while the mean scores obtained on the physiological needs, safety needs, belonging-love needs, and esteem needs subdimensions were 8.24 ± 4.28 , 17.77 ± 7.74 , 28.05 ± 13.43 , and 41.15 ± 16.30 , respectively (Table 2). The mean score obtained on the Career Choice Scale for Nursing was 97.66 ± 25.66 ; the mean score obtained on the professional suitability subdimension was 66.75 ± 22.28 and 30.91 ± 9.89

on the livelihood concerns subdimension (Table 3). Table 4 shows the comparison of the total scores obtained on the SAOSI and CCSN with respect to the descriptive characteristics. The comparison of the total scores obtained on the SAOSI and CCSN with respect to gender showed that male students received a higher mean score on the SAOSI, while female students obtained a higher mean score on the CCSN. The difference between the total mean scores was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) (Table 4). The study showed that the difference in the total mean scores obtained on the SAOSI with respect to years of attendance was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). In contrast, the mean score obtained on the CCSN by the first-year students was higher than the mean scores received by the other students, with the difference between the scores of the first-year students and other students being statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) (Table 4). The comparison of the total mean SAOSI and CCSN scores with respect to the region of residence showed that the students residing in villages or counties obtained higher scores on the SAOSI, and the difference between the mean score obtained by the students residing in villages or counties and the total mean SAOSI score was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The difference in the mean CCSN scores with respect to the region of residence was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) (Table 5). The correlations between relationship status and total scores obtained on the SAOSI and CCSN were not statistically significant in the study ($p > 0.05$) (Table 4). The relationships between the subdimensions of the SAOSI and CCSN and the total mean scores are given in Table 5. Statistically significant negative relationships between the professional suitability subdimension of the CCSN and all subdimensions of the SAOSI and the total SAOSI scores were found in the study ($p < 0.05$) (Table 5), which indicate that professional suitability increased when self-actualization obstacles decreased. Statistically significant positive relationships between the livelihood concerns subdimension of the CCSN and all subdimensions of the SAOSI and the total SAOSI scores were found ($p < 0.05$) (Table 5), which indicate that choosing the nursing profession by considering their livelihood concerns increased when self-actualization obstacles increased.

Table 1. Distribution of the Descriptive Characteristics of the Students(n=824).

Descriptive Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Female	623	75.6
Male	201	24.4
Class		
First year	213	25.8
Second year	253	30.7
Third year	250	30.3
Fourth year	108	13.1
Region of Residence		
Village or county	339	41.1
City center	485	58.9
Place of Residence		
State-funded dormitory	473	57.4
Private dormitory/condominium	91	11.0
With the family	92	11.2
House	168	20.4
Marital Status		
Married	15	1.8
Single	809	98.2
Type of High School of Graduation		
General high school	327	39.7
Science high school	16	1.9
Anatolian high school	406	49.3
İmam Hatip (religious vocational) high school	13	1.6
Industrial vocational high school -technical high school	14	1.7
Anadolu teacher high school	29	3.5
Vocational high school (trade, medical)	8	1.0
Other	11	1.3
Participation in Leisure Time Activities		
I actively participate.	141	17.1
I participate as a spectator.	381	46.2
I participate both actively and as a spectator.	169	20.5
I do not participate either actively or as a	133	16.1

spectator

Relationship with the Opposite Sex

Very important	89	10.8
Important	221	26.8
Somewhat important	187	22.7
Not important	156	18.9
Not at all important	171	20.8

Relationship Status

In a relationship	247	30.0
Not in a relationship	577	70.0

Age (Mean) 20.17±1.68

Number of siblings (Mean) 3.69 ±2.45

TOTAL **824** **100**

Table 2. Self-Actualization Obstacles Subdimensions and Mean Scores

SAOSI	Item Number	Distribution Range	X±SD
Physiological needs	12	0-21	8.24±4.28
Safety needs	25	0-44	17.77±7.74
Belonging-love needs	46	0-79	28.05±13.43
Esteem needs	56	0-102	41.15±16.30
SAOSI Total	139	0-234	95.22±38.94

Table 3. Career Choice Scale for Nursing Subdimensions and Mean Scores

Career Choice Scale for Nursing	Item number	Distribution Range	X±SD
Professional suitability	11	0-110	66.75±22.28
Livelihood concerns	6	0-60	30.91±9.89
Career choice total	17	10-170	97.66±25.66

Table 4. Subdimensions of the CCSN and SAOSI and the Relationship between the Total Scores

Subdimensions	Physiological Needs	Belonging- Love Needs	Safety Needs	Esteem Needs	SAOSI Total
Professional Suitability	r=-0.125 p<0.001	r=-0.145 p<0.001	r=-0.259 p<0.001	r=-0.249 p<0.001	r=-0.222 p<0.001
Livelihood Concerns	r=0.147 p<0.001	r=0.213 p<0.001	r=0.152 p<0.001	r=0.215 p<0.001	r=0.214 p<0.001
CCSN Total	r=-0.055 p=0.112	r=-0.050 p=0.149	r=-0.168 p<0.001	r=-0.139 p<0.001	r=-0.116 p<0.001

Table 5. Comparison of the mean scores obtained by the students according to descriptive characteristics on the Self-actualization Obstacles Screening Inventory and Career Choice Scale for Nursing

Descriptive Characteristics	SAOSI Total	Test and p	Career Choice Total	Test and p
Gender				
Female	93.48±37.90	t=2.268	99.93±24.70	t=4.518
Male	100.63±41.63	p=0.024	90.63±27.33	p=0.000
Class				
First year	91.92±37.25		100.11±27.00	
Sophomore year	98.66±38.34	F=1.383	97.32±26.60	F=3.421
Junior year	95.79±40.68	p=0.247	98.87±23.31	p=0.017
Senior year	92.37±29.24		90.84±25.07	
Region of Residence				
Village or county	99.62±38.18	t=2.720	97.47±25.84	T=-0.018
City center	92.15±39.20	p=0.007	97.80±25.57	p=0.857
Place of Residence				
State-funded dormitory	96.67±37.28		100.17±24.32	
Private dormitory/condominium	91.98±38.31	F=1.815	97.78±23.12	F=4.368
With family	87.40±41.61	p=0.143	93.72±27.00	p=0.005
House	97.20±41.94		92.70±28.96	
Marital Status				
Married	88.66±32.20	KW=4571	91.80±30.09	KW=4886
Unmarried	95.14±38.96	p=0.206	97.98±9.87	p=0.180
Living together	146.33±44.37		61.33±58.02	
Type of High School of Graduation				
General high school	95.45±37.06		99.55±23.86	
Science high school	102.25±54.00		109.25±18.81	
Anatolian high school	94.50±40.04	KW=3989	96.83±26.63	KW=13989
İmam Hatip (religious vocational) high school	91.38±37.80	p=0.781	95.15±34.19	p=0.051
Industrial vocational high school- technical	108.85±33.33		97.28±32.20	

high school

Anadolu teacher high school 98.58±40.37 83.86±24.75

Vocational high school (trade, medical) 90.37±34.41 92.62±24.54

Other 86.63±40.44 99.09±23.64

Participation in Leisure Time Activities

I actively participate. 92.17±45.69 94.98±30.76

I participate as a spectator. 40.15±15.32 100.41±23.54

I participate both actively and as a spectator. 41.29±14.70 96.38±23.78

I do not participate either actively or as a spectator 45.54±17.42 F=3.475 p=0.016 94.27±27.30 F=2.905 p=0.034

Relationship with the Opposite Sex

Very important 111.73±42.06 94.34±27.71

Important 95.08±38.16 F=5.647 98.95±24.81 F=0.788

Somewhat important 90.17±34.08 p=0.000 97.76±23.99 p=0.533

Not important 90.17±38.45 99.20±24.22

Not at all important 96.95±41.51 96.21±28.60

Relationship Status

In a relationship 95.28±43.07 t=0.027 96.96±27.18 t=-0.515

Not in a relationship 95.20±37.07 p=0.979 97.96±25.01 p=0.607

Discussion

The results obtained in this study examining the relationship between the self-actualization obstacles and career choices of nursing students are discussed by referring to other studies in the relevant scientific literature (Kuzgun, 1973; Foullus et al., 1976; Ozdemir et al., 2016; Kulakci et al., 2015; Akkoyun et al., 1989; Ozpancar et al., 2008).

By considering the distribution of the mean SAOSI scores and the highest possible scores that can be obtained on the scale and its subdimensions, it can be argued that the total mean scores obtained by the students, both on the total scale and on its subdimensions, were low.

Hence, it was concluded that the self-actualization obstacles of the nursing students were low. The mean scores obtained on the SAOSI revealed that the senior-level students received the lowest scores on the SAOSI, the results of which led to the conclusion that the senior-level nursing students had the fewest self-actualization obstacles. The study by Ertem (2004) investigating the self-actualization obstacles of first-year-level and senior-level students were showed that the total scale scores of the senior-level students were lower than those of the first-year-level students. These results agree with those reported by Foullus (1976). The lower SAOSI scores obtained by the senior-level students are attributable to their longer years of

education in college, which can be argued, resulted in their more improved coping skills.

The distribution of the total mean CCSN scores and the mean scores obtained on its subdimensions showed that the mean scores were at a moderate level considering the distribution range. In their studies on career choice in nursing, Ozdemir et al. (2016) and Kulakci et al. (2015) reported lower total mean CCSN scores than those obtained in this study; therefore, the results of the present study do not agree with the results presented by Ozdemir et al. (2016) and Kulakci et al. (2015).

The comparison of the mean SAOSI and CCSN scores with respect to the descriptive characteristics of the students showed that the difference between the total scores obtained on the scales was statistically significant in terms of gender ($p < 0.05$), with the scores of the male students being significantly higher on the SAOSI, and the mean scores of the female students being higher on the CCSN. The higher SAOSI scores obtained by the male students were attributed to the relatively later onset of social, emotional, and physical developments in males, and the relatively later experience males have with taking on responsibilities as a result of traditional expectations. This finding conforms to the findings reported in the study by Akkoyun et al. (1989). The higher mean CCSN scores obtained by the female students were associated with the long-continued non-involvement of male students in the field of nursing education and the general view regarding the nursing profession as a female profession. In a similar study on the subject, Ozdelikara (2016) reported that the majority of the nursing students consisted of female students.

The mean scores obtained on the SAOSI did not significantly vary according to student year-level ($p > 0.05$), whereas the difference between the mean CCSN scores with respect to the student year-level in school was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The non-significant change in the mean SAOSI scores agrees with the results obtained in the unpublished post-graduate dissertations of Yemenici (2006) and Oktan (1999), both of whom showed that the self-actualization levels of college students did not vary according to the student year-level. In contrast, the finding does not agree with the results obtained in the unpublished post-graduate dissertations by Ertem (2004) and Yalcin (2000), who showed that the self-actualization obstacles and self-actualization

levels of high school students varied according to grade level. The mean CCSN scores decreased as the student year-level increased. Since nursing education is an applied training field, the time the students spend in hospitals increases as they move on to the next grade, and this in turn results in students increasingly encountering the challenges of the profession, which may have negatively affected the decisions of students about career choices. In their study investigating the views of nursing students on career choice and practicing the profession, Sirin et al. (2008) determined that as the student year-level increased, the students' positive views on the profession decreased.

The analysis of the total mean SAOSI scores with respect to the region of residence revealed that the students residing in villages or counties obtained higher SAOSI scores, and the difference between the scores was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), whereas the difference between the mean CCSN scores was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The higher SAOSI scores obtained by the students residing in villages or counties can be attributed to the challenges originating from lower socioeconomic levels and living conditions and their effects on self-actualization. The non-significant difference in the CCSN scores with respect to the region of residence led to the conclusion that the students chose the nursing profession for similar reasons, due to the fact that society regards nursing as a profession that offers greater employment opportunities (Ozdemir et al., 2016).

The difference between the mean SAOSI scores with respect to the students' place of residence was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), while the relationship between the mean CCSN scores was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The students who resided in state-funded dormitories may have had a lower economic status, and therefore, may have chosen the profession because of its employment opportunities. In their studies, Ozdemir et al. (2016) and Ozdelikara et al. (2016) also reported that the students chose the nursing profession because of their belief that nurses are less likely to become unemployed. These studies agree with the findings presented in this study.

The comparison of the mean SAOSI and CCSN scores with respect to participation in leisure time activities revealed that the differences between the mean scores and total mean scores for each

scale were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The students who actively participated in leisure time activities obtained a higher mean SAOSI score. This finding, however, does not agree with the results obtained by Tam (2004). This difference between the results was attributed to the challenges involved in the active participation in leisure time activities because of the climate of the region, albeit, the high active participation ratio, and therefore, the limited time the students can spare for active participation in leisure time activities. The students who participated in leisure time activities as spectators obtained higher mean CCSN score. In agreement with the study by Kepceoglu (2004), personal characteristics, physical and mental skills, gender, and environmental factors were included among the important factors affecting the career choice of an individual. Dedicating leisure time to social activities is closely related to the place of residence, culture, and economy and thus, the students who participated in leisure time activities as spectators obtained higher scores.

The difference in the SAOSI and CCSN scores of the students with respect to their view on their relationships with the opposite sex showed that the students who attached great importance to their relationships with the opposite sex obtained higher SAOSI scores, with the difference between their scores and the total mean score being statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). This result was attributed to their decision to spend their energy on other concerns (such as flirting) as opposed to devoting their efforts to self-actualization.

The comparison of the mean SAOSI and CCSN scores with respect to the descriptive characteristics of the families showed that the difference between the mean SAOSI scores and total mean SAOSI score with respect to family environment was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), while the relationship between the mean CCSN scores was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The students who regarded the family environment they live in as a democratic family environment obtained a lower mean self-actualization obstacles score, which agrees with the results obtained by Kuzgun (1973) and Ertem (2004). These results indicate that the democratic family environment was the most suitable environment for self-actualization and that individuals raised in democratic family environments grew up to be more realistic, coherent, and open-minded individuals who are

aware of their potential. Furthermore, the students living in democratic family environments obtained higher scores in choosing the nursing profession. It is the parents who predominantly influence and direct their children's professional and educational plans (Kulaksızoglu et al., 1999). These results led to the conclusion that exhibiting attitudes and behaviors in the family environment that support the professional development of an individual affected the professional development process and vocational preference behaviors.

The comparison of the mean SAOSI and CCSN scores with respect to the socioeconomic statuses of the families showed that the differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The students who regarded the socioeconomic statuses of their families as low had greater self-actualization obstacles. A review of the relevant scientific literature revealed that there are studies that reached similar results (Ertem, 2004; Gratton, 1980), which led to the conclusion that the socioeconomic status of the families was important in accessing the opportunities required in achieving self-actualization. The significant difference in the mean CCSN scores was attributed to the high employment rates in the nursing profession. In their studies, Ozdemir et al. (2016) and Ozdelikara et al. (2016) reported that employment opportunities and financial status affected career choices. The findings of the present study agree with these results.

As can be seen in Table 6, the comparison of the mean SAOSI and CCSN scores with respect to the educational background of the parents showed that the difference between the mean SAOSI scores was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), while the difference between the mean CCSN scores was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). There were no studies found in the literature that specifically focused on the self-actualization obstacles inventory by taking into consideration the educational background of the families. The results of this study indicated that the educational background of the families was an important factor in each stage of the self-actualization obstacles. From these results, it was concluded that students' own personalities, skills, and interests were the focal points of their career choices and that therefore, their career choices were not affected by the educational backgrounds of their families.

Significant negative relationships were found

between the total CCSN score, its professional suitability subdimension and all subdimensions of the SAOSI, while statistically significant positive relationships were found between the total CCSN score, its livelihood concerns subdimension and all subdimensions of the SAOSI ($p < 0.01$). The results of the study indicated that career choice ratios in nursing increased with the increase in self-actualization obstacles, and that the students who chose the nursing profession by considering their livelihood concerns had greater self-actualization obstacles. From these results, it was concluded that the members of the profession need to achieve further professional development to reach the self-actualization step; moreover, it was concluded that high self-actualization levels had a positive effect on choosing the nursing profession.

Limitations: Limitation of this study is that the data were based on students' self-reports. Thus, the obtained results cannot be generalized outside of the sample.

Impact statements: Self-actualization refers to the desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for them to become actualized in what they are potentially. Self-actualization has a great importance in nursing profession. It is important to start self-actualization developing while nursing education. The novelty of the research is associated with the fact that self-actualization of nursing students during the education period. The results of this study showed that students' career choices have increases when the self-actualization obstacles of the students decrease.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It was obtained in this study conducted with 824 students revealed that the level of choosing the nursing profession increased as the self-actualization obstacles decreased. The male students had greater self-actualization obstacles, while the level of female students who preferred the nursing profession was higher. The students living in villages or counties had greater self-actualization obstacles. The first-year students received higher scores in choosing the nursing profession. The students who actively participated in leisure time activities had greater self-actualization obstacles. The students who attached great importance to their relationships with the opposite sex had greater self-actualization obstacles.

According to the above conclusions, the study can offer the following suggestions: The basic physiological needs of nursing students should be provided.

For nursing students to experience a sense of belonging to their groups and to develop healthy relationships that involve love and respect, seminars and study groups that aim to combat loneliness and fear of rejection and promote communication skills, assertiveness, and problem-solving skills should be provided. In addition to these programs, students are encouraged to participate in the training programs for nursing and through promotional initiatives.

Furthermore, courses that facilitate self-expression and creativity and that are prepared in such a way that supports communication within the classroom will prove to be beneficial in the self-actualization processes of the students. Further studies focusing on the determination of the effects of students' participation in activities that reduce self-actualization obstacles, as well as the effects of their participation in sociocultural activities during their leisure time are necessary.

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Impact statement: The study results suggest that nursing students should determine their self-actualization obstacle in a controlled way in order to career choice of nursing students effectively.

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