

Original Article

Perception of Nursery Students about Concept of Gender

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Abstract

Background: Concept of gender effects the society and must be put into account by the health caregivers.

Aim: This study was performed in order to examine the perceptions of nursery students about concept of gender

Methods: This descriptive study was carried with last year students who enrolled in faculty of Health Sciences Nursing Program during 2017-2018 academic year. Universe of this study was last year nursing students and sample was consisted of 63 students who volunteered to participate in to this study.

Results: The mean age of the students was 21.63 ± 0.86 and 39.7% were male. Mean age of the nursing students was calculated as 21.63 ± 0.86 years and 60.3% of them were females. (%). Most of the students report (96.8%) that being a woman is very hard and women are usually responsible from various things in home. One of the most important responsibilities of women is to care for her children (95.2%). If the expectations from women decreases in the society the women's life will be easier according to nursing students (65.1%).

Conclusion: Students have various perceptions related to women. The economic distress and social expectations arising from the political and financial problems in the society and the concern of securing the future of the family and children have great impact on the the decisions of families. Different studies need to be conducted to determine the the perception of students problems related to concept of gender and family patterns.

Key words: Woman, mother, working woman, nursery students.

Introduction

The family structure that affects the physical, mental and emotional development of children contributes to personality development. In all societies nuclear family is the initial social matrix within which personality is rooted and nourished (Clausen, 1966). Personality development is the result of congenital gender traits that change by integrating with subjective or objective roles. In this process of change, the individual is expected

to identify with the society, to determine his / her situation and to have a role in this situation. The social status and roles, social values, and judgments of individuals are shaped by the expectations of society. The concept of gender is used by sociologists to describe all the socially given attributes, roles, activities, and responsibilities connected to being a male or a female in a given society. Our gender identity determines how we are perceived, and how we are expected to think and act as women and men,

because of the way society is organised (March et al., 1999). Women and men are equal by law, but inequalities emerge due to the concept of gender among the population. In the studies, it is stated that patriarchal structure and the concept of gender weaken women, do not allow them to develop their own selves, and necessitate domestic work (Becker, 1999). It is inevitable that gender-specific inequalities continue to be experienced unless conscious changes in such social structures are affected by women and families. History refers to the stories of girls who could not go outside because they were women, was sent to the home, buried alive. In most social structures, men are seen as centers of power and authority, and as confident, fearless, and independent individuals. In such societies, women are defined as the center of home and sexuality, and as passive, dependent individuals, with unstable and emotional weaknesses. Therefore, women are perceived as physically powerless, left uneducated, and exposed to inequalities in wage employment. Women have a high potential for exposure to physical, sexual, and emotional violence in societies that focus only on their reproductive roles.

Methods: This descriptive study was carried with last year students who enrolled in faculty of Health Sciences Nursing Program during 2017-2018 academic year. Universe of this study was last year nursing students and sample was consisted of 63 students who volunteered to participate in to this study. Data were collected by using a form developed for this study according literature. Statistical analysis were done by using SPSS 22.0, results were given by means and percentages.

Results

The mean age of the students was 21.63 ± 0.86 and 39.7% were male. Mean age of the nursing students was calculated as 21.63 ± 0.86 years and 60.3% of them were females. Parents of the cases were married for 26.8 ± 6.40 years and have official marriage certificate (76.2%). Some of the reported that they observed multiple plural marriages in their home towns. They interpreted being married with more than one women as deteriorating women rights (95.2%), feelings of worthless among women (90.5%). Most of the students report (96.8%) that being a woman is very hard and women are usually responsible from various things in home. One of the most important responsibilities of women

is to care for her children (95.2%). If the expectations from women decreases in the society the women's life will be easier according to nursing students (65.1%). Being a mother is a difficult responsibility in terms of raising children (92.1%), being a mother is stressful experience (65.1%). More than half of the students live in nuclear families (65.1%). The society where the students live (57.1%) gave them an opportunity to grow in relaxed family and half of the students (54%) reported that women who work from outside home as successful. Students also report that women do not have time to spent with children and their husbands. The positive effect of working outside from home are economic input.

The students participating in the study stated that the university environment contributed to gaining new friendships (41.3%), recognizing different cultures (31.7%), gaining new experiences (28.6%), improving interpersonal communication (25.4%) and raising awareness on trust (19%).

60.3% of the students live in Marmara region. In this study, there are mostly (65.1%) nuclear families in the regions where the students grow. It was found that there were polygamous marriages in the region where 15.9% were raised. Majority of the students were grown in the Marmara region where the study was conducted. Making new friends and recognizing the different cultures was the most reported effects by the participants. Having a strong friendship may alleviate the problems related to stress and difficulties associated with major life transitions (Tokuno, 1986). Homesickness and friend sickness may contribute to poor university adjustment and ultimately leaving university. It is seen that the type of family dominant in the society where students grow, facilitates the fulfilment of their wishes, provides a chance to express themselves, does not encounter any obstacles to go where they want, and strengthens their family ties ($p < 0.05$). It is seen that this effect has emerged in individuals with nuclear type families. The mother of all the students, the father of 98.4% are alive. 60.3% of the mothers are primary, and 52.4% of fathers are secondary school graduates. 84.1% of the mothers are housewives and the 28.6% of fathers are self-employed. The mean duration of marriage of the parents is 26.63 ± 5.48 years. Only 76.2% of the parents are formally married. The mean number of siblings of the students was 2.85 ± 2.21 (Table 3). 95.2% of

the students stated that the most difficult part of being a woman, in general, was to hold the first degree accountable for the children. 63.5% of the students said that the most positive aspect of being a woman is that the woman does not have to work. 65.1% stated that the most positive aspect of being a mother was the support of her children (spiritual / material) and 65.1% stated that was having children who would take care of herself in the future. (Table 5). Positive effect of being a working woman were the success and appreciation of working women (54%); reduced home responsibilities and fatigue %84; 66.7% of the most positive side is that they do not need anyone. Those who think that the mothers working in the region where they grow up cannot spare the necessary time for their children and spouses are 73%. 95.2% of the students stated that the hardest part of being a working mother is

the lack of support from the spouse in the care of the children. 71.4% of the students think that being a working mother does not have any positive side (Table 6). It is seen that the family type, which is dominant in the society where students grow, facilitates the fulfillment of the wishes, provides a chance to express themselves, prevents any obstacles to come and going to the desired place, and strengthens the family ties ($p < 0.05$). In individuals grown in populations where single marriage is dominant, this effect appears to occur (Table 5).

The most difficult part of being women in the region they were grown up was to have to serve the husband according to 96.8% and the most positive effect was not being expected to contribute economically according to 54% of the students.

Table 1. Distribution of information about students' sociodemographic characteristics and place of residence (N = 63)

Age			
(Mean+ SD)	21,63±0,86	Distribution width=20-24	
	n	%	
Gender			
Female	38	60.3	
Male	25	39.7	
Time in this city			
Less than 5 years	36	57.1	
Between 6-10 years	2	3.2	
More than 10 years	25	39.7	
Contribution of the university environment			
I've made new friends	Yes	26	41.3
I recognize different cultures	Yes	20	31.7
I gained new experiences	Yes	18	28.6
Improved interpersonal communication	Yes	16	25.4
I have increased my awareness of trusting or not trusting people	Yes	12	19.0
Growing Region			
Marmara	38	60.3	
Aegean	3	4.8	
Central Anatolia	7	11.1	
Black Sea	5	7.9	
Eastern Anatolia	5	7.9	
Southeastern Anatolia	3	4.8	
Mediterranean	1	1.6	
Azerbaijan	1	1.6	
Family type dominated in the region where grows			
Nuclear family	41	65.1	

Extended family	22	34.9
The existence of polygamy in the region where he/she grows		
Yes	10	15.9
No	53	84.1

Table 2. The distribution of the effect of the dominant family type on the life of the students in their own society (N = 61)

Variable name		The type of family in which he/she grows		significance
		Nuclear family	Extended family	
Facilitating the realization of requests	Yes	27	3	X ² =19.389 *p=0.000
	No	9	6	
	No idea	5	13	
Providing a chance to express yourself	Yes	31	5	X ² =22.972 *p=0.000
	No	8	5	
	No idea	2	12	
No obstacle to go anywhere	Yes	20	4	X ² =13.601 *p=0.001
	No	16	6	
	No idea	5	12	
Strengthening family ties	Yes	28	8	X ² =15.095 *p=0.001
	No	10	3	
	No idea	3	11	
Early maturation	Yes	14	12	X ² =3.473 p=0.176
	No	6	4	
	No idea	21	6	
Adopting the superiority of men	Yes	11	12	X ² =7.589 p=0.054
	No	9	5	
	No idea	21	5	
Feeling lonely	Yes	9	5	X ² =0.035 p=0.983
	No	18	10	
	No idea	14	7	

Table 3. Distribution of family characteristics (N = 63)

Variable name		n	%
Is your mother alive?	Yes	63	100
Is your father alive?	Yes	62	98.4
Mother's education status	Not literate	7	11.1
	Primary school	38	60.3
	Middle School	18	28.6
Father's educational status	Not literate	1	1.6
	Primary school	21	33.3
	Middle School	33	52.4
	High school	8	12.7
Mother's profession	Housewife	53	84.1
	Officer	1	1.6
	Worker	6	9.5
	Retired	3	4.8
Father's profession	Unemployed	2	3.2
	Self-employment	18	28.6
	Worker	15	23.8
	Officer	8	12.7
	Farmer	9	14.3

	Retired	11	17.5
Marriage type	Religious	15	23.8
	Formal	48	76.2
	Mean ± SD		Range
Number of siblings (n)	2.85 ± 2.21		1-12
Duration of marriage (years)	26.63 ± 5.48		10-39

Table 4. Distribution of students' opinions on the effect of polygamy on femininity and motherhood (N = 63)

		Yes (%)	No (%)	No idea (%)
The effect on female perception	Their rights being ignored.	60 (95.2)	3 (4.8)	0(0)
	Feeling worthless	57 (90.5)	3 (4.8)	3(4.8)
	Domestic role complexity	25(39.7)	5(7.9)	33(52.4)
	Being unhappy	38(60.3)	4(6.3)	21(33.3)
	Reduction of interest to spouse	26(41.3)	9(14.3)	28(44.4)
	Feeling loneliness and jealousy	46(73.0)	4(6.3)	13(20.6)
Effect on motherhood perception	Increasing addiction to children	33(52.4)	7(11.1)	23(36.5)
	mother feeling worthless	45(71.4)	12(19.0)	6(9.5)
	Feeling of insufficiency in child care	27(42.9)	12(19.0)	24(38.1)
	Unable to be a mother and family	52(82.5)	2(3.2)	9(14.3)
	Wanting their children to be superior to the other spouse's children	21(33.3)	6(9.5)	36(57.1)
	Reflection of anger to her husband towards children	13(20.6)	23(36.5)	27(42.9)

Table 5. Distribution of opinions of students in terms of being a woman and mother focusing difficulties and advantages

		Yes (%)	No (%)	No idea(%)
Being a woman	Difficulties			
	To be treated as if she had to do everything about family and not to be appreciated	59(93.7)	2(3.2)	2 (3.2)
	Given priority to men	26(41.3)	17(27.0)	20(31.7)
	To have to meet the expectations of the family before herself	57(90.5)	5(7.9)	1(1.6)
	Can't go beyond the expectations of society	41(65.1)	11(17.5)	11(17.5)
	All the challenges of being a woman (rape. harassment. deceit, exposure to violence)	49(77.8)	6(9.5)	8(12.7)
	Ease			
	Doesn't have to work.	40(63.5)	13(20.6)	10(15.9)
	only being responsible for meeting the needs of spouses and children.	24(38.1)	28(44.4)	11(17.5)
	She is aware of everything in the house and has control of everything.	12(19.0)	36(57.1)	15(23.8)
Being a mother	Difficulties			
	Not appreciated	45(71.4)	3(4.8)	15(23.8)
	Lack of spousal support	53(84.1)	4(6.3)	6(9.5)
	Keeping children with first-degree responsibility	58(92.1)	2(3.2)	3(4.8)
	Ease			
	share their troubles with children	33(52.4)	16(25.4)	14(22.2)
	To have (material-spiritual) children to take care of themselves in the future	41(65.1)	8(12.7)	14(22.2)

Table 6. Gender distribution of students' opinions about being a woman and mother (N = 63)

Variable name			Gender		Significance
			Female	Male	
The difficulties of being a woman in general	To be treated as if she had to do everything about family and not to be appreciated	Yes	37	22	$X^2=3.270$ $p=0.195$
		No	0	2	
		No idea	1	1	
	Prioritizing men in making decisions about family	Yes	15	11	$X^2=0.274$ $p=0.872$
		No	10	7	
		No idea	13	7	
	Lack of spousal support	Yes	32	21	$X^2=0.279$ $p=0.870$
No		2	2		
No idea		4	2		
Keeping children with first-degree responsibility	Yes	37	23	$X^2=1.655$ $p=0.437$	
	No	0	1		
	No idea	1	1		
To have to meet the expectations of the family before herself	Yes	36	21	$X^2=4.246$ $p=0.120$	
	No	1	4		
	No idea	1	0		
Failure to go beyond the expectations of society	Yes	27	14	$X^2=3.213$ $p=0.201$	
	No	4	7		
	No idea	7	4		
All the challenges of being a woman (rape, harassment, deceit, exposure to violence)	Yes	29	20	$X^2=4.321$ $p=0.115$	
	No	2	4		
	No idea	7	1		
The positive aspects of being a woman in general	Doesn't have to work.	Yes	22	18	$X^2=1.971$ $p=0.373$
		No	10	3	
		No idea	6	4	
	She is only responsible for meeting the needs of spouses and children.	Yes	12	12	$X^2=2.665$ $p=0.264$
		No	20	8	
		No idea	6	5	
	Aware of everything since everything is told to her at home, and has control of everything.	Yes	5	7	$X^2=3.303$ $p=0.192$
		No	25	11	
		No idea	8	7	
Difficulties of being a mother in general	Not to be appreciated despite doing homework	Yes	27	18	$X^2=1.167$ $p=0.558$
		No	1	2	
		No idea	10	5	
	Lack of spousal support	Yes	32	21	$X^2=0.279$ $p=0.870$
No		2	2		
No idea		4	2		
Keeping children with first-degree responsibility	Yes	35	23	$X^2=0.139$ $p=0.933$	
	No	1	1		
	No idea	2	1		
Constantly worrying about the future of their children	Yes	29	18	$X^2=4.662$ $p=0.097$	
	No	3	6		
	No idea	6	1		
The positive aspects of being a mother in general	Children to support her in all matters	Yes	18	12	$X^2=0.292$ $p=0.864$
		No	8	4	
		No idea	12	9	
	Not having to work and therefore less fatigue	Yes	18	14	$X^2=0.930$ $p=0.628$
		No	8	3	
		No idea	12	8	
	To be able to share	Yes	21	12	

	troubles and troubles with children	No No idea	9 8	7 6	$X^2=0.321$ $p=0.852$
	Support of children (spiritual / material)	Yes No No idea	24 7 7	17 1 7	$X^2=3.147$ $p=0.207$
	Having children who will take care of herself in the future	Yes No No idea	29 6 3	12 9 4	$X^2=5.336$ $p=0.069$

Table 7. The distribution of the effect of the dominant family type in the population where the students grow (N = 61)

Variable name		Family type in society		significance
		Monogamous	Polygamous	
Facilitating the fulfillment of requests	Yes	27	3	$X^2=19.389$ *p=0.000
	No	9	6	
	No idea	5	13	
Providing a chance to express yourself	Yes	31	5	$X^2=22.972$ *p=0.000
	No	8	5	
	No idea	2	12	
No obstacle to come and go anywhere	Yes	20	4	$X^2=13.601$ *p=0.001
	No	16	6	
	No idea	5	12	
Strengthening family ties	Yes	28	8	$X^2=15.095$ *p=0.001
	No	10	3	
	No idea	3	11	
Providing maturation at a younger age	Yes	14	12	$X^2=3.473$ $p=0.176$
	No	6	4	
	No idea	21	6	
Adoption of the superiority of men in society	Yes	11	12	$X^2=7.589$ $p=0.054$
	No	9	5	
	No idea	21	5	
Negative effects such as loneliness	Yes	9	5	$X^2=0.035$ $p=0.983$
	No	18	10	
	No idea	14	7	

Table 8. Distribution of students' opinions about being women and mothers in the region where they grow (N = 63)

	Yes (%)	No (%)	No idea (%)
Difficulties of being a woman in your region			
Usually lives a difficult life and is in a vicious circle	50 (79.4)	6 (9.5)	7 (11.1)
seen as a sexual object	22 (34.9)	33 (52.4)	8 (12.7)
She has to wear her clothes according to community expectations.	22 (34.9)	33 (52.4)	8 (12.7)
She has to serve her husband.	61 (96.8)	2 (3.2)	0 (0)
Their rights are often ignored.	60 (95.2)	3 (4.8)	0 (0)
Being a woman (rape, harassment, deceit, exposure to violence)	44 (69.8)	8 (12.7)	11 (17.5)
The positive aspects of being a woman in the region			
What they say at home is accepted.	18 (28.6)	33 (52.4)	12 (19.0)
Everything is under the woman's control.	15 (23.8)	36 (57.1)	12 (19.0)
Economic contribution is not expected.	34 (54.0)	20 (31.7)	9 (14.3)

Man and woman are considered equal and receive the same responsibility.	16 (25.4)	35(55.6)	12 (19.0)
Approach to working women in the region they grow			
Seen as successful and being appreciated.	34 (54.0)	22(34.9)	7 (11.1)
Operation is not supported.	23 (36.5)	31(49.2)	9 (14.3)
Allowed to work in economic difficulties.	23 (36.5)	31(49.2)	9 (14.3)
The community does not support it and the woman works on her intention.	21 (33.3)	28(44.4)	14 (22.2)
Difficulties of being a woman in the region they grow			
Deal with work life and house at the same time.	52 (82.5)	5(7.9)	6 (9.5)
Home responsibilities are reduced and get very tired.	53 (84.1)	4(6.3)	6 (9.5)
Women are seen as sexual objects.	21 (33.3)	9(14.3)	33 (52.4)
Family conflict is experienced because members not want her to work.	18 (28.6)	28(44.4)	17 (27.0)
The positive aspects of being a woman working in the region they have grown up			
Has economic freedom. She doesn't need anyone	42 (66.7)	10(15.9)	11 (17.5)
She does not have to explain to anyone what she does.	3 (4.8)	47(74.6)	13 (20.6)
She has the opportunity to move away from home.	11 (17.5)	29(46.0)	23 (36.5)
No positive side.	32 (50.8)	19(30.2)	12 (19.0)
Approaches to the working mother in the region they grown up			
There is no attitude difference between working and non-working mother.	17 (27.0)	40(63.5)	6 (9.5)
It is considered successful.	33 (52.4)	19(30.2)	11 (17.5)
It is a must to deal with everything if she has chosen to work.	20 (31.7)	32(50.8)	11 (17.5)
She is thought to have no time for his children and spouse.	46 (73.0)	7(11.1)	10 (15.9)
Difficulties of being a working mother in the region they had grown up			
The mother is more responsible for the education of children than the father	59 (93.7)	1(1.6)	3 (4.8)
Increased general fatigue of the mother	59 (93.7)	0(0)	4 (6.3)
Lack of support of the spouse for the care of children	60 (95.2)	1(1.6)	2 (3.2)
Even she gets very tired from work. she has to take care of the child at home	60(95.2)	3(4.8)	0 (0)
The positive aspects of being a working mother in the region they had grown up			
Contribute to the fulfillment of the economic demands of the family	36 (57.1)	14 (22.2)	13 (20.6)
Not economically dependent on the partner	34 (54.0)	14 (22.2)	15 (23.8)
To have the power to look after the children when she is alone	15 (23.8)	31 (49.2)	17 (27.0)
Doing regular household chores	10 (15.9)	31 (49.2)	22 (34.9)
There is no positive side.	45 (71.4)	14 (22.2)	4 (6.3)

Discussion

The concept of gender at the social level is a structure that sees men superior to women. Although equality between women and men is advocated in developed countries and in the modern world, the inequality between men and women is still a current problem in societies where the concept of gender is advocated at the

social level. Society defines men as strong, independent, and determined; and women as polite, attractive, benevolent, and pessimistic. These gender patterns have a strong structure that influences individuals' roles, interests, and skills, education, and choice of profession (Kollmayer et al., 2018). The gender difference brought about by birth has given rise

to privileges or disadvantages by societies to girls or boys. The separate attitudes shown to girls and boys model the roles of mother and father (Marks et al., 2009) (Çiftçi, 1991). Therefore, parental attitudes in the family are adopted by children and become a habit. This family-based process teaches gender development and differentiation as modelling, effective experience and direct education, and identifies women and men in social life. Girls learn the role of mother; boys learn to play the role of father and gender at the social level develops. Within the social system, individuals are expected to learn the roles that are specific to their gender, to acquire their behaviours and attitudes, and to be in accordance with social and cultural requirements. This situation shows that social structure is effective in determining the working areas and the position in social life according to gender characteristics (Ökten, 2009).

95.2% of students believe that polygamy will lead to ignorance of femininity and 82.5% believe that it can affect being mother and family negatively (Table 4). The polygamous marriages may have negative effects on a woman. Woman in a polygamous marriage, have more problems than monogamy as marital problems. Also polygamous women are less satisfied with their life because they feel pains, sufferings and are jealous of co-wives (Al-Krenawi et al., 2011). Polygamous families will be more aggressive, have disorder sin conducts and behaviour, difficulties in communication and adjustment problems. These, in turn, will affect the children's mental health. Poor in self-concept and high rate of attrition of school as well as sexual activity and abuse of drug and alcoholism are main risks. Incidences of psychiatric disorders, low self-esteem and loneliness are higher for women in polygamous relationships. Polygamy may be hazardous both for man and woman (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000). The difficulties and positive aspects of being a woman, the difficulties and positive aspects of being a mother did not differ by gender ($p > 0.05$) (Table 4).

Loeber's study shows that families and individuals differ in case of long-term changes in the environment (Loeber, 2008). The differences generally noticed were; changes in cultural norms, decrease in the number of households, share in the duties and responsibilities of

housework, equal participation of spouses in child care. Also decrease in approaches that show men more valuable than women, increase in girls' education level, positive changes in job preferences and income levels were noticed. This positive differentiation in the understanding of women of the new generations led to the rejection of the approach of the old generation that made men superior and caused conflicts in some circumstances. Individuals try to adapt by interacting in their environments. Thus, it becomes a member of the environment and is accepted by society. In our study, it was found that the environments were effective on individuals. Social environments change and differentiate individuals positively and negatively. Therefore, careful selection of the social environment is important.

The family is an important social structure that teaches and maintains gender equality or inequality in an unintentional way and creates and maintains behaviours towards male-female inequality. Children and young people who learn these behaviours in family structure transfer their behaviours to future generations and ensure the continuity of these behaviours in family and social structure. Factors such as family type, number of living individuals, source of authority, family relations and socio-cultural values are effective in ensuring the continuity of these learned behaviours. Gender role attitudes are connected to aspects of family life, including relationship quality and division of labor, and are shaped by the family context (Marks et al., 2009). Considering these factors, it is estimated that individuals can develop the attitude and behaviour according to the type of family they have. On the other hand, the mother is responsible for the attitudes and behaviours of children regardless of the type of family. Therefore, the role of women in the change and development of behaviours learned in the family is quite large.

Gender at the social level is one of the most important indicators used to assess the change and development of a society. Changes in societies also cause changes in the role and status of women. Social changes enable women to participate actively in society, in public institutions and in politics, and to have equal rights and status with men. In the ongoing social change with industrialization, the roles of men and women are changing, where women are not

only mothers, but they are the individuals who have a profession, who make economic contributions to the family, and who earn money.

These in turn necessitated the work of the mother as well as the transformation of the family structure from the extended family to the nuclear family structure. As a result, the traditional family type (extended family) has lost its importance and a new type of family (core, modern) has emerged in which women and men have equal responsibilities. In our country, the extended family type has been decreasing since 1968, and the nuclear family and fragmented family type has started to increase. Family structure is important to predict the position of men and women in the family (Sutay & Murat, 2012).

The family, which is the smallest unit representing the society, is important in the legal system and religion. The societies see the family institution as a union with different marriages. These associations are held in the form of religious, official, religious and official marriages. Religious marriage is seen as a necessity of faith and official marriage was insufficient in terms of religion and that marriage and divorce differed in terms of convenience/difficulty.

Polygamy is marriage with more than one man or woman. While polygamy is prohibited in the civil legal system, it is possible that it can happen when necessary conditions arise in the religious belief system. When this happens, it is imperative that justice is treated equally in meeting the basic needs of spouses such as time allocation, sheltering, eating, drinking and dressing (Al-Krenawi et al., 2011).

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