

Abstract

This thesis deals with the changes in the concept of the ideal characteristics of a nurse in the context of historical development, social changes and other factors. These include mainly an educational reform, new biomedical findings and the influence of the media along with generational differences in nurses. This thesis aims at comparing the ideal characteristics of a nurse as portrayed in professional literature with ideas which nurses have themselves about their own desired professional characteristics. Specifically, it concentrates on what values these ideal characteristics represent in their eyes, whether their ideas change with age and how this relates to the perception of the prestige of the nursing profession by nurses themselves.

The theoretical part is divided into chapters describing the ideal professional characteristics of a nurse based on the findings acquired from professional literature, whose topics also correlate with chapters in the research part and represent the development of the “model” nurse concept from the beginnings of Christianity to the present day. It assesses the differences in the concept of this ideal in Western Europe and the Czech lands in the course of the 20th century, in the context of social transformations and changes in nursing education. Furthermore, based on available research, it compares this ideal as perceived by four generations of nurses in active employment.

The practical part explores the notion that actual nurses have about ideal characteristics of a nurse. Applying the survey method, it also identifies their motivations to study at a nursing school, generational stereotypes caused among other things by a different educational system and the perception of their professional prestige. Subsequently, the presented results are compared with findings from Czech and foreign literature referred to in the theoretical part.

Keywords: ideal professional characteristics of a nurse, development of the concept of ideal nursing, generational stereotypes of nurses, nursing education, qualitative research.