



# The Relationship between Gender Stereotype Perception and Career Interest in Nursing in Male Nursing Students at Gorontalo State University

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## ABSTRACT

The perception of gender stereotypes is still an issue inherent in the nursing profession, especially for male nursing students. The view that nursing is an identical profession to women can influence the interest of male students in planning and determining a career in nursing. This study aims to determine the relationship between the perception of gender stereotypes and the career interests of male nursing students at Gorontalo State University. This study uses a correlational analytical design with a cross sectional approach. The research sample amounted to 76 male nursing students who were taken using the total sampling technique. Data collection was carried out using questionnaires on the perception of gender stereotypes and career interests, while data analysis used the Spearman Rank test. The results showed that most students had a positive perception of gender stereotypes as many as 60 respondents (78.9%), and career interest was in the high category as many as 40 respondents (52.6%). The results of the Spearman Rank test obtained a  $p$ -value = 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), which shows that there is a relationship between the perception of gender stereotypes and interest in a career as a nurse in male nursing students at Gorontalo State University. So based on the results of this study, it is hoped that the campus, especially the nursing department, can increase education and support efforts to build a positive perception of the nursing profession in male students.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Law No. 38 of 2014, a nurse is a person who has graduated from higher nursing education, both at home and abroad that has been legally recognized by the government in accordance with laws and regulations. Nurses themselves have an important role in the overall health care system, so the number of nursing workers is among the most compared to other health workers around the world (Ritonga & Damani, 2020).

Data from the World Health Organization in 2024, shows that there are around 29 million nurses worldwide, with more than 80% of nurses working in countries with a population that is overall inhabited by half of the world's population. This is in line with data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2023, where the distribution of nurses in OECD member countries with the most nurse presentations is owned by Finland, Switzerland and Norway with a percentage of more than 18 practicing nurses per 1,000 population.

In Indonesia itself, according to data from the Central Statistics Agency in 2023, the number of nurses reached 582,023 people, this figure shows that nurses dominate health workers in Indonesia with a proportion of 38.80% of the total health workers in Indonesia. Meanwhile, according to the Central Statistics Agency of Gorontalo Province in 2023, nurses still hold the profession with the highest number of health workers in Gorontalo Province as many as 3,715 people compared to other health workers.

One of the main reasons nursing is still the most popular profession to date is that the average individual who chooses nursing reveals that they want to make a positive impact on the lives of others as well as the emergence of a desire to work caring for the sick (McKenna et al., 2023).

This caring activity in question is often associated with the characteristics of empathy, care and gentleness, where these qualities are often associated with a woman. Florence Nightingale herself as a pioneer of nursing has mentioned that nurses are an extension of the role of women to nurture. This view creates gender boundaries based on gender that are still very firmly rooted in society to this day (Prosen, 2022).

The existence of gender restrictions in the world of nursing is in line with data in the World Health Organization in 2020, where around 90% of the nursing workforce is female, and according to the Ministry of Health in 2021, female nurses reached 71% and the number of male nurses is only a third of the total number of nurses in Indonesia. The impact of these gender restrictions is the emergence of gender inequality in the nursing profession. Gender inequality in Indonesia arises because of the social structure that is still strong in people's lives. This is usually influenced by historical background, environmental conditions, customs, and the existence of a culture that is still strong in the patriarchal system (Larashati, 2022).

According to the Global Gender Gap Report in 2024, the level of gender equality in 146 countries has only reached 68.6%, this figure is only up 0.1% from 2023. This slow pace of development shows that progress towards gender equality is still very minimal, and it is estimated that the new world will achieve full equality between men and women in about 134 years or five generations. Meanwhile, according to the 2023 Global Gender Gap report in the journal Nurdin (2024), the level of gender gap in Indonesia is still quite high and places Indonesia in 87th place out of 146 countries. This position shows that Indonesia is still lagging behind several other countries in Southeast Asia.

One of the obstacles to achieving gender equality is the perception of gender stereotypes in work, especially jobs that are labeled as a female profession. The field of nursing is the most obvious example, because until now there are still many people who associate the nursing profession with women. However, gender stereotypes in the world of work not only lead to the labeling of nursing as a female profession, but can also occur in two directions, for example, men who choose the nursing profession often face social stigma because they are considered less masculine, on the other hand, women who pursue professions that are socially constructed as male jobs such as engineering, often face stereotypes in the form of assumptions that they are inappropriate or incapable work in this field so that gender stereotypes and discrimination not only have an impact on the motivation and sustainability of health workers, but can also reduce the effectiveness of the services provided (Aca et al., 2025).

This gender stereotype phenomenon is reinforced by findings in a study by Prosen (2022) which found that the majority of male students reported experiences of gender-based discrimination during their studies. Some of them noted that patients often view certain procedures, such as washing the perineal area, treating the perianal area, or bathing newborns, as more appropriate when performed by a female nurse. Nursing students also said that this stereotype has been felt since the beginning of lectures, which is characterized by the assumption that certain actions in nursing practice are more identical to women. Furthermore, the results of the observations showed that nursing interventions for young female patients were more often given to female nurses, while male nurses were less likely to be given the opportunity to be involved.

This condition not only creates injustice in nursing practice, but also has the potential to affect a person's career interests starting from the moment a person makes a career decision. So to be able to make a career choice, it starts by evaluating and comparing the available alternatives before finally choosing one of the many alternative considerations that are most suitable and suitable for oneself. In a study conducted by Arjanggi (2017) it is shown that in the career decision-making process, it is known that only 8.48% do not experience obstacles in making decisions for a career.

Referring to this data, it is important for individuals, especially students who are still classified as teenagers, to consider many aspects before determining a career in the future. The existence of obstacles in career decision-making is not only influenced by internal factors such as motivation and talent, but external factors also play a role in decision-making, one of which is social norms regarding gender roles (Fadilla & Abdullah, 2019). This prompted researchers to be interested in further reviewing the attachment of gender stereotypes that play a role in shaping the career interests of male nursing students.

Inequality in the number of nursing students based on gender is also seen in various higher education institutions in Indonesia. Based on data obtained by researchers through the official website of each university, at the Semarang Health Polytechnic in 2025, female students totaled 491 people, while male students were only 92 people. This inequality was also seen at STIKES Hutama Abdi Husada Tulungagung in 2020/2021 there were 305 female students while men are only 103 students. As for the DIII Nursing program at the STIKES Bethesda Yakkum campus, out of 44 students, there are 39 women and only 5 male students.

Meanwhile, based on data obtained by researchers from the operator of the Department of Nursing at Gorontalo State University, in the last four batches the number of male students was relatively the same, which was only about 20 people per batch. For example, in the class of 2022 there were 19 male students out of a total of 139 students, with a proportion of less than 15%. The same pattern was also seen in the 2023 and 2024

batches, where the number of male students remained at 20, a significant decrease was seen in the class of 2025, where out of 144 students, only 17 were male while the rest were dominated by female students. This data shows that the inequality in the number of students based on gender has been consistent in recent years.

To get an initial picture, the researcher observed 5 male students of the Department of Nursing, Gorontalo State University through a Google Form containing several open-ended questions. The results of observations show that most students argue that the number of men in the nursing department is still small because there is an assumption in society that this profession is more suitable for women and the image of masculinity which is often considered less aligned with the role of nurses. This view shows that gender stereotypes in the field of nursing appear in the role aspect, where the task of caring for and providing health care is more often associated with the role of women. Furthermore, when asked about their interest in continuing their career as a nurse, two respondents stated that they had confidence to continue the profession, while the other three still showed doubts and had not confirmed their career choice in the field of nursing.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the nursing profession is still very synonymous with one gender and this has a strong influence on the views of male students. Therefore, researchers feel the need to further review how perceptions of gender stereotypes play a role in shaping career interests, especially in Gorontalo Province. To date, there has been no research that specifically examines these issues in a local context. This research is important because it can provide an overview of how gender stereotypes affect the career interests of male students, as well as support gender equality efforts in the field of nursing. In addition, the results of this study are expected to strengthen the position of nursing as a profession that is open to both men and women, as well as an input for educational institutions and health workers to create a more equitable and inclusive learning and work environment. The focus of this research is directed at the relationship between the perception of gender stereotypes and the career interests of male students majoring in Nursing at Gorontalo State University.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research has been carried out at the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Sports and Health, Gorontalo State University on October 23 – November 02, 2025. The type of quantitative research uses a cross-sectional research design. The sampling technique in this study uses Total Sampling with a sample of 76 respondents. This research instrument used the Gender Stereotype Perception questionnaire to measure respondents' views on gender roles and feasibility in the nursing profession, as well as a career interest questionnaire to measure respondents' interest in choosing and planning a career in nursing.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents by age

| Yes          | Age         | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1            | 17-19 Years | 36            | 47.4           |
| 2            | 20-22 Years | 39            | 51.3           |
| 3            | >23 Years   | 1             | 1.3            |
| <b>Total</b> |             | <b>76</b>     | <b>100</b>     |

Source : Primary Data 2025

Based on the table above, of the 76 respondents studied, most of them were aged 20–22 years old with a total of 39 people (51.3%), followed by 36 people aged 17–19 years (47.4%), and only 1 person (1.3%) over 23 years old were in the class of 2022.

Table 2. Characteristics of respondents by semester

| Yes          | Semester     | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1            | Semester I   | 17            | 22.4           |
| 2            | Semester III | 20            | 26.3           |
| 3            | Semester V   | 20            | 26.3           |
| 4            | Semester VII | 19            | 25.0           |
| <b>Total</b> |              | <b>76</b>     | <b>100</b>     |

Source : Primary Data 2025

Based on the table above, of the 76 respondents, most were in Semesters III and V, as many as 20 people (26.3%) each. Meanwhile, respondents in Semester I amounted to 17 people (22.4%) and 19 people (25.0%) in Semester VII.

Table 3. Respondents' characteristics based on reasons for choosing a nursing major

| Yes          | Reason                        | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1            | Own desires                   | 31            | 40.8           |
| 2            | Family recommended            | 26            | 34.2           |
| 3            | Not accepted for other majors | 6             | 7.9            |
| 4            | High job opportunities        | 6             | 7.9            |
| 5            | Forced by parents             | 1             | 1.3            |
| 6            | Curious                       | 1             | 1.3            |
| 7            | Follow Sister                 | 1             | 1.3            |
| 8            | Don't Know                    | 2             | 2.6            |
| 9            | Invited by a Friend           | 1             | 1.3            |
| 10           | A lot of income               | 1             | 1.3            |
| <b>Total</b> |                               | <b>76</b>     | <b>100</b>     |

Source : Primary Data 2025

Based on the table above, of the 76 respondents, most of them chose nursing majors because of their own desires as many as 31 people (40.8%), and because they were advised by their families as many as 26 people (34.2%). Other reasons such as not being accepted into other majors, high job opportunities, and other factors have a smaller percentage.

Table 4. Characteristics of respondents based on families working in the health sector

| Yes          | Options | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|---------|---------------|----------------|
| 1            | Yes     | 52            | 68.4           |
| 2            | No      | 24            | 31.6           |
| <b>Total</b> |         | <b>76</b>     | <b>100</b>     |

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Based on the table above, of the 76 respondents, most of them had family members who worked in the health sector as many as 52 people (68.4%), while as many as 24 people (31.6%) did not have family members who worked in the health sector.

Table 5. Respondents' characteristics based on comments that nursing is not a suitable profession for men

| Yes          | Options | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|---------|---------------|----------------|
| 1            | Yes     | 44            | 57.9           |
| 2            | No      | 32            | 42.1           |
| <b>Total</b> |         | <b>76</b>     | <b>100</b>     |

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Based on the table above, out of 76 respondents, most of them had received comments that nursing was not a suitable profession for men as many as 44 people (57.9%), while 32 people (42.1%) stated that they had never received such comments.

Table 6. The characteristics of the respondents based on the experience of receiving different treatment for being male in the nursing department

| Yes          | Options | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|---------|---------------|----------------|
| 1            | Yes     | 16            | 21.1           |
| 2            | No      | 60            | 78.9           |
| <b>Total</b> |         | <b>76</b>     | <b>100</b>     |

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Based on the table above, out of a total of 76 respondents, as many as 16 respondents (21.1%) stated that they had received different treatment because they were male in the nursing department, while 60 respondents (78.9%) stated that they had never received different treatment.

Table 7. Characteristics of respondents based on plans to work as nurses

| Yes | Options  | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-----|----------|---------------|----------------|
| 1   | Yes      | 41            | 53.9           |
| 2   | No       | 5             | 6.6            |
| 3   | Not Know | 30            | 39.5           |
|     | Total    | 76            | 100            |

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Based on the table above, out of a total of 76 respondents, as many as 41 respondents (53.9%) stated that they planned to work as nurses after graduation, 5 respondents (6.6%) stated that they did not plan to work as nurses, and 30 respondents (39.5%) stated that they did not know or had no definite decision regarding the plan to work as a nurse after completing their education.

### Univariate Analysis

Table 8. Distribution of Respondents Based on Perception of Gender Stereotypes

| Yes | Options          | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-----|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1   | Low              | 0             | 0              |
| 2   | Medium (Neutral) | 16            | 21.1           |
| 3   | High (Positive)  | 60            | 78.9           |
|     | Total            | 76            | 100            |

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Based on the table above, it shows that the level of perception of gender stereotypes (Positive) in male nursing students at Gorontalo State University is at the highest level, which is 60 people (78.9%).

Table 9. Distribution of Respondents Based on Career Interests as Nurses

| Yes | Options | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-----|---------|---------------|----------------|
| 1   | Low     | 3             | 3.9            |
| 2   | Medium  | 33            | 43.4           |
| 3   | Height  | 40            | 52             |
|     | Total   | 76            | 100            |

Source : Primary Data, 2024

Based on the table above, it shows that the most interest in a career as a nurse among male nursing students at Gorontalo State University is at the highest level, namely 40 people (52.6%) and the least in the Low category, which is 3 people (3.9%).

### Bivariate Analysis

Table 10. The relationship between the perception of gender stereotypes and interest in a career as a nurse in male nursing students at Gorontalo State University

| Gender Stereotype Perception | Career Interests |      |        |       |        |       |       |       | Spearman's Rho Statistic Test Results |  |
|------------------------------|------------------|------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------------------|--|
|                              | Low              |      | Medium |       | Height |       | Total |       |                                       |  |
|                              | N                | %    | N      | %     | N      | %     | N     | %     |                                       |  |
| Low 0                        | 0                | 0    | 0      | 0     | 0      | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0,000                                 |  |
| Medium (Neutral)             | 2                | 2,6% | 14     | 18,4% | 0      | 0,0%  | 16    | 21,1% |                                       |  |
| High (Positive)              | 1                | 1,3% | 19     | 25,0% | 40     | 52,6% | 60    | 78,9% |                                       |  |
| Total                        | 3                | 3,9% | 33     | 43,4% | 40     | 52,6% | 76    | 100%  |                                       |  |

\*The result of the spearmen 'rho coefficient correlation test was 0.573

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Based on the table above, it can be seen that high career interest is more found in respondents with positive gender stereotype perceptions, namely as many as 40 respondents (52.6%) out of a total of 76 respondents. On the other hand, in the group with a neutral perception, there were no respondents who had a high career interest (0%), and most were only in the medium interest category, namely 14 respondents (18.4%). In line with these findings, the results of the Spearman Rank test showed a p-value = 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) which indicates a significant relationship between the perception of gender stereotypes and interest in a career as a nurse. The correlation coefficient value of 0.573 shows that the relationship between the two is in the medium and unidirectional categories, where the more positive the perception of gender stereotypes of students, the higher their interest in a career as a nurse, especially in male nursing students.

## DISCUSSION

### Perception of gender stereotypes in male nursing students

Based on the results of the study, it is known that the perception of gender stereotypes in male nursing students at Gorontalo State University is mostly in the high category, namely 60 respondents (78.9%). The high category here shows that the higher the score obtained, the more positive the student's perspective on gender stereotypes. This means that they have an open mind that the nursing profession is not only suitable for women, but can also be lived by men. Meanwhile, as many as 16 respondents (21.1%) were in the medium category. The medium category shows that some students still have a neutral view, that is, they are not fully open to the view that men and women have equal opportunities in the nursing profession. Thus, the results of this study show that the majority of male nursing students at Gorontalo State University have a high perception of gender stereotypes in a positive direction, which means that they already have an open view of the equal roles of men and women in the nursing profession.

The high perception of gender stereotypes in male nursing students of Gorontalo State University, which reached 60 respondents (78.9%) can be seen from the respondents' answers to the gender stereotype perception questionnaire. Based on the results of filling out the questionnaire, most of the respondents showed a very positive attitude towards the statement "I believe that men and women have the same right to choose the nursing major", Out of a total of 76 respondents, as many as 59 respondents (77.6%) stated that they strongly agreed with the statement. This figure shows that the majority of students have a strong view of gender equality in the selection of nursing majors.

If you look at it in more detail through the master table on statement number 2, it can be seen that almost all respondents gave yes and strongly agreed answers. This answer pattern is consistent at all semester levels, starting from semesters I, III, V, to semester VII. Although respondents were in different age ranges and had different academic experiences, their views on equal rights between men and women in choosing nursing majors tended to be uniform.

This finding is in line with the research of Prosen, (2022) which found that male students see nursing as a profession that has high human values and responsibility, not just a profession that is synonymous with the role of women. They realize that the nursing profession requires technical skills, physical strength, and critical thinking skills. This shows a shift in perspective on the role of gender in nursing, from previously limited to more open and balanced and some students said that their existence in the world of nursing is actually an opportunity to change people's views on this profession.

In addition, the high perception of gender stereotypes in a positive direction can also be seen from the respondents' answers to statement number 17 in the gender stereotype perception questionnaire. In this statement, the researcher submitted the statement "I feel supported by my classmates even though I am a man". The results showed that most of the respondents felt this support, where as many as 39 respondents expressed strongly agree and 36 respondents expressed agreement. These findings show that male respondents feel accepted and supported in the nursing academic environment, so that gender stereotypes that have been inherent in the nursing profession are not fully felt in daily interactions in the lecture environment.

This shows that the social and academic environment has an important role in shaping positive perceptions of gender stereotypes. When male students are accepted and treated equally in the campus environment, they will feel more comfortable and motivated to pursue the nursing profession without feeling that there are differences in roles based on gender.

This is in accordance with the research of Fajri Arianti & Rachmawati Musslifah, (2024) Ideal gender equality in the campus environment will contribute to improving the quality of education and teaching, as well as producing better human resources. Every individual is given equal opportunities and rights regardless of gender. Therefore, an inclusive academic environment is one of the factors that encourages the formation of positive gender stereotype perceptions in male nursing students. This support allows students to feel accepted and valued, so that their view of the nursing profession is no longer tied to the old stereotype that nursing is only suitable for women.

On the other hand, there are still respondents who have a negative view of the nursing profession. This can be seen in the respondent's answer to statement number 18, namely "I have heard others judge it strange for men to enter nursing". Based on the results of the questionnaire, as many as 32 respondents agreed and 12

respondents stated that they strongly agreed with the statement. These results show that although respondents personally have a positive view of gender equality in nursing, they still face negative judgments from the surrounding environment. These findings reflect the conditions that actually occur in the field, where stereotypes against men in the nursing profession are still heard through comments, assumptions, or judgments from others outside and within the academic environment.

As a reinforcement of these findings, the characteristics of the respondents also showed that some respondents had received comments that nursing was not a suitable profession for men. Based on research data, as many as 44 respondents (57.9%) stated that they had received the comment, while 32 respondents (42.1%) stated that they had never. These findings confirm that negative views of men in the nursing profession are still real in the field and felt directly by respondents.

The high number of respondents who still receive stereotypical comments shows that people's views on the role of gender in the nursing profession have not completely changed. Although most respondents have positive perceptions and do not experience direct discriminatory treatment, negative comments from the social environment can still affect the way they view the profession. Thus, it can be concluded that negative comments and views from the social environment are still a challenge for male nursing students.

### **Interest in a career as a nurse in male nursing students**

Interest in a career as a nurse among male nursing students at Gorontalo State University as many as 40 Respondents (52.6%) were at a high level, then as many as 33 Respondents (43.4%) were at a medium level. In addition, as many as 3 Respondents (3.9%) were at a low level. Based on the data, the results of the study show that the majority of Male Nursing Students at Gorontalo State University have a high interest in a career as a nurse.

According to the research data, as many as 40 Respondents (52.6%) were at a high level that can be seen in the statement in the questionnaire, where the majority of respondents agreed with the statement "I want to make the nursing profession my main career after graduation" This proves that most male nursing students have a strong motivation and commitment to a career in nursing after completing their education. These findings are in line with the results of research by Putu & Purnama, (2020) which shows that the profession of nurse practitioner is the most popular career choice among nursing students, both in undergraduate students and in professional students. As many as 45.45% of respondents in the study chose to become a nurse practitioner as their main career choice, while another 33.52% planned to continue their studies to the master's or nursing specialist level.

In addition, the high interest in a career as a nurse among male nursing students at Gorontalo State University can also be strengthened by the characteristics of respondents in the reason for choosing a nursing major, where as many as 31 respondents (40.8%) stated that the choice to enter the nursing department was their own desire. This is in line with the results of the questionnaire which showed that most respondents agreed with the statement "My decision to enter nursing was purely based on personal desire." This finding is in line with research from Hasanah, (2023) where making decisions to choose a major independently is an important step that will determine the direction of a person's life in the future. Before really making a choice, a person needs to know and understand themselves, including their potential, interests, and goals to achieve.

In addition to personal desire factors, the high interest in a career as a nurse in male nursing students is also influenced by the support of the family environment. Based on research data, as many as 26 respondents (34.2%) stated that their decision to choose a nursing major was based on advice from their families. This is in accordance with research from Nadira & Khaeroni, (2025) which reveals that parental social support has a significant role in the decision-making process of students when choosing a study program, with a determination coefficient value of 0.494 almost half of the variability which shows that student decisions can be explained by the existence of social support from parents, especially in the form of emotional support, informational, and material. This form of support helps students build confidence, provide direction, and ensure the availability of the resources needed to make appropriate and directed decisions.

The high interest of students to continue their careers as nurses is also reflected in the respondents' answers to statement number 10, namely "My experience while attending lectures made me even more interested in becoming a nurse". The results showed that as many as 35 respondents agreed and 33 respondents stated that they strongly agreed with the statement. This indicates that the lecture experience that students have lived plays a role in strengthening their interest in the nursing profession. When viewed at the semester level, the pattern of agreeing and strongly agreeing answers appears consistently throughout the semester. These findings show that interest in continuing a career as a nurse does not only arise after students are exposed to clinical materials and practices in depth, but has been formed since the first semester.

The findings in this study are in line with the results of research by Wardhani & Muharni, (2025) which shows that students' experience while undergoing nursing education is one of the important factors in shaping interest in continuing a career as a nurse. In the study, it was explained that students' interaction with the learning process, academic environment, and experiences during lectures also strengthened their interest in the nursing profession.

Meanwhile, there are still 3 respondents (3.9%) who have low career interest which shows an answer pattern consistent with disbelief in the nursing profession as their career goal. Based on the results of the questionnaire, respondents with low interest were more likely to express approval on items such as "Becoming a nurse was not my main goal before going to college" and "After a few semesters, I started considering other professions." These answers show that some students do not have a strong internal drive to make the nursing profession a long-term career choice.

This phenomenon is increasingly seen when associated with the characteristics of respondents, where there are around 30 students (39.5%) who admit that they do not have a definite decision regarding the continuation of their careers in the field of nursing. This indicates that even though they are studying in the nursing department, some students are still in the exploration stage and do not have full commitment to this profession. One of the common reasons is that students enter nursing majors not based on personal desires, but because they are not accepted into other majors that are their main choice. Students who are in this condition often experience doubts, lack of suitability, or lack a deep interest in the nursing profession.

This situation is in line with the opinion of Nugroho (2018), who states that students who choose study programs not based on self-interest tend to have lower motivation to learn, have difficulty fostering a sense of belonging to the profession, and are less able to build long-term career commitments.

The results of this study also show that there are a small number of male nursing students who expressly state that they do not want to continue their career as nurses. This can be seen from the answers of respondents number 3 and number 6 in semester VII, as well as respondent number 54 in semester V, who chose the answer no to the statement related to their interest in continuing their career as a nurse. According to the researcher, this condition reflects that the length of the study period or the high semester level is not always directly proportional to the interest in a career as a nurse. In final semester students, exposure to the realities of nursing practice, job demands, and the picture of the workload of nurses they encounter during lectures and clinical practice can be factors that affect the decline in career interest. Meanwhile, in middle semester students, the choice is no, which can indicate the process of finding other career interests outside the nursing profession as academic experience increases.

### **The relationship between gender stereotype perception and interest in a career as a nurse in male nursing students at Gorontalo State University**

Based on the results of the bivariate analysis using the spearman rank test, a p-value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) was obtained, which means that there is a significant relationship between the perception of gender stereotypes and interest in a career as a nurse in male nursing students at Gorontalo State University. In addition, the correlation coefficient value of 0.573 shows that the relationship between the two variables is in the moderate and positive category, meaning that the more positive the student's perception of gender stereotypes, the higher their interest in a career as a nurse.

Based on the results of the study, in the group of students with moderate (neutral) gender stereotype perceptions, it was seen that out of a total of 16 respondents, there were still 2 students (2.6%) who had low interest in a career. These findings show that even though students do not have a negative perception of the nursing profession, this is not necessarily followed by an interest in making the nursing profession a career choice. In other words, a neutral attitude towards gender stereotypes is not strong enough to encourage positive career interest.

Furthermore, most of the students in this neutral perception group were in the category of moderate career interest, which was 14 students (18.4%). The dominance in this category illustrates that students tend to be in a position of "hesitation", i.e. they have not completely rejected but have not shown a strong commitment to the nursing profession. This condition indicates that perceptions that have not developed in a positive direction only produce stagnant and unincreased interest. Interestingly, there was not a single student with a neutral gender stereotype perception who had a high interest in a career (0%). These findings reinforce the suspicion that a perception that is only neutral has not been able to be a driving factor for the formation of strong career interest.

This finding is in line with research from Ayla Güllü, (2025) who explains that a person's perspective on gender roles affects their career choices in the field of nursing. The study stated that students who have a more open and equal attitude towards gender roles tend to have higher interest and confidence to choose nursing as their main career. In contrast, students who still have a traditional or neutral view of gender roles often feel hesitant and unsure about pursuing a career as a nurse.

In addition, the same study also confirms that students who still hold traditional views on gender roles usually have lower levels of career confidence. This is because they still feel unsure whether men can be accepted well in the nursing profession which has been considered more feminine. (Ayla Güllü, 2025)

Students who have a high (positive) perception of gender stereotypes show better interest in a career than the neutral perception group. In this group, only 1 student (1.3%) has a low interest in a career. This very small number suggests that when students view the nursing profession as a reasonable and appropriate job for men, the likelihood of a low career interest becomes smaller. Meanwhile, as many as 19 students (25.0%) were

in the category of medium career interest. This means that most students in the positive perception group already have an interest in the nursing profession, but this interest is not strong enough to be categorized as a high interest. In other words, positive perceptions have been able to prevent low interest, but have not fully encouraged students to have a very high interest in a career as a nurse.

In the group of students with high career interests, most of the respondents, namely 40 students (52.6%), had a positive perception of gender stereotypes. These findings show that positive perceptions of the nursing profession are not only related to the emergence of interest, but play an important role in shaping career commitments. Students who view the nursing profession as a decent and suitable job for men tend to feel more confident in their career choices, so their interest does not stop at their initial interest, but develops into a strong desire to pursue the profession.

These results show that positive gender stereotypical perceptions are a reinforcing factor in the formation of high career interest. The more positive the student's perception of the position of men in the nursing profession, the less doubt they feel and the greater their readiness to make the nursing profession a future career.

This finding is in line with the Social Role Theory put forward by Alice H. Eagly, where society's view of the roles of men and women is formed from long-standing social and cultural divisions. (Nater et al., 2024). So in this study, the stereotype that the nursing profession is identical to women can affect how male students view the suitability of the profession for themselves. When students have a positive perception of gender roles, namely by seeing that men are also able and appropriate to carry out nursing roles, social barriers due to gender stereotypes are reduced, so that their interest in a career in this field becomes higher.

In addition, these findings can also be explained using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) from Ajzen and Fishbein. In this theory, the intention or interest to behave is influenced by three main factors, namely attitude toward behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. (Evelyna, 2021)

Students with a positive perception of gender stereotypes have a good attitude towards the nursing profession, because they consider this profession to be a decent and dignified professional job. They may also receive social support (subjective norms) from the campus and family environment that respects career choices without gender bias, and feel that they have adequate abilities to pursue the profession (perceived behavioral control) (Turalska et al., 2024).

The relationship between the perception of gender stereotypes and career interests can also be seen through the results of the answers to the research instruments used. In the questionnaire on the perception of gender stereotypes, most respondents gave positive answers to statements related to career and environmental aspects. The majority of respondents agreed with statements such as "I believe men can be successful and have a good career as a nurse" and "I still feel proud to be a nursing student even though I am a man." This answer pattern shows that most male students at Gorontalo State University already have an open view and no longer consider the nursing profession as an identical job to women.

These results show that positive perceptions of gender stereotypes play a major role in shaping attitudes and beliefs towards career choices. Students who consider the nursing profession as an equal field for men and women tend to have a more positive attitude towards this profession, feel accepted by the social environment, and have high confidence to carry out the role of nurse in the future. This condition reinforces the assumption that when social pressure and negative views on gender decrease, interest in pursuing the nursing profession will increase (Wardhani & Muharni, 2025)

This trend is also seen in the results of the career interest questionnaire as a nurse, where the majority of respondents gave a yes and strongly agreed answer to statements such as "I feel confident that nursing is the right profession for me. This answer pattern shows that students with positive gender stereotypical perceptions not only have an open view, but have also formed strong emotional and motivational attitudes towards the nursing profession.

In addition, some respondents also gave positive answers to the aspect of experience during nursing lectures in the career interest questionnaire, such as the statements in the questionnaire "My experience during lectures made me more interested in becoming a nurse" and "I feel suitable for the materials and activities I underwent during nursing college". Many students admit that their clinical practice experience, on-campus learning, and interaction with health workers have made them better understand the meaning of the nursing profession. This experiential factor strengthens the relationship between perception and interest, because the more students understand the reality of the nursing profession, the less the influence of gender stereotypes that were originally an obstacle in determining career choices.

The results of the study show that the absence of negative comments or treatment related to gender stereotypes does not automatically make students have a clear interest in a career in the nursing profession. This can be seen in respondent number 14 (semester 1), respondent number 33 (semester 3), and respondent number 44 (semester 5). All three respondents stated that they had never received negative comments or treatment related to the nursing profession as a job for men, but at the same time stated that their career interests were still "unknown". These findings show that the absence of negative experiences only puts students in a neutral state, rather than directly forming a strong career interest. In the first semester respondents

(respondent number 14), the unclear interest in a career can be understood as part of the process of adaptation and initial exploration to the world of lectures and the nursing profession. Meanwhile, in respondents in semester 3 and semester 5 (respondents numbers 33 and 44), the answer "don't know" indicates that even though they do not face barriers in the form of negative stereotypes, there are not yet strong enough driving factors to form a clear career decision.

Thus, these results reinforce the main finding of the study that the formation of career interests is not only influenced by the absence of negative stereotypes, but also requires active positive perception, clinical learning experience, and a deeper understanding of the role and prospects of the nursing profession. Without these factors, students tend to be in a position of doubt and have not been able to determine the direction of their careers, even though the social environment they experience is relatively supportive. Thus, the results of filling out the two questionnaires show a consistent relationship between students with positive perceptions of gender roles in the nursing profession who tend to have a higher interest in a career.

## CONCLUSION

The perception of gender stereotypes in male nursing students at Gorontalo State University was in the High (Positive) category of 60 Respondents (78.9%) and Medium (Neutral) as many as 16 Respondents (21.1%).

Interest in a career as a nurse among male nursing students at Gorontalo State University was in the high category of 40 Respondents (52.6%), the medium category of 33 Respondents (43.4%), and the low category of 3 Respondents (3.9%).

There is a relationship between the perception of gender stereotypes and the career interests of male nursing students at Gorontalo State University. The test results showed a correlation coefficient value of 0.573 with p-value = 0.000, which means that there is a moderate and statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The positive correlation value shows that the direction of the relationship is unidirectional, meaning that the more positive the student's perception of gender stereotypes in the nursing profession, the higher their interest in a career as a nurse.

## ADVICE

### For Nursing Majors

The results of this research are expected to be a consideration for the department to make efforts to increase the career interest of students, especially male students, through educational and socialization activities that emphasize that the nursing profession is an equal profession for men and women.

### For Respondents

Students are expected to be able to build a positive perception of the nursing profession and not be influenced by gender stereotypical views that are still developing in society.

### For the next researcher

Further researchers are expected to engage a larger and more diverse sample from various nursing education institutions. In addition, it is recommended to add other variables such as social support and clinical practice experience that may also influence the career interest of male nursing students.

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