

# Florence Nightingale and Her Legacy

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**Abstract:** The history of the nursing profession dates back to ancient times. It is associated with inherently human feelings such as empathy, care, and love for others, which have always driven people to help one another in times of sorrow and illness. However, the honor of establishing nursing as an independent profession belongs to Miss Florence Nightingale, the first researcher and founder of modern nursing. She revolutionized public consciousness and perspectives on the role and place of nurses in public health. The legacy of Florence Nightingale continues to inspire today's generation. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that students are interested in studying Florence Nightingale's work and her contribution to nursing. Their interest is realized at the medical college through open events, including those dedicated to International Nurses Day, and through the preparation of informational leaflets and brochures highlighting Nightingale's invaluable contribution to the development of the nursing profession and the advancement of healthcare reform. This article attempts to explore Nightingale's intellectual legacy in the field of nursing.

➤ **Objective:**

To study students' attitudes toward Florence Nightingale and her legacy.

➤ **Materials and Methods:**

A sociological study was conducted using a survey method, in which 300 nursing students participated.

➤ **Results:**

Among the students who first learned about Florence Nightingale's biography during college classes, 58% wanted to learn more about her contributions and achievements. Most respondents (66%) believe that her work is significant for future generations. A significant portion of students (58%) expressed a desire to dedicate their lives to the nursing profession, following in the footsteps of Florence Nightingale.

➤ **Conclusion:**

Students are interested in studying Florence Nightingale's work and her contribution to nursing. Their interest is fostered at the medical college through open events, including those dedicated to International Nurses Day, as well as by preparing informational leaflets and brochures highlighting Nightingale's invaluable role in the development of the nursing profession and the advancement of healthcare reforms.

**Keywords:** Nursing, Florence Nightingale, Founder, and Empathy.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Scholars have confirmed, based on archaeological findings dating back approximately 100,000 years BCE, that nursing practices emerged before the development of human civilization and general medical knowledge. The origins and development of nursing are closely linked to religious and military activities<sup>1</sup>. It is believed that nursing began as a practical expression of compassion, caring for a loved one or tending to someone wounded in battle. However, over time,

nursing evolved into a more complex and organized activity, eventually leading to a legitimate societal need to train specialized professionals in this field<sup>2</sup>.

In the earliest periods of human history, the care and support of the sick and weak were carried out by their family members or relatives. There were no specially trained individuals for nursing; rather, it was primarily older women with rich life experience who took on this responsibility. Gradually, however, specially trained caregivers began to

emerge, and the practice of nursing gained momentum in its development. In this regard, special mention should be made of ancient Greece and Rome<sup>3</sup>.

According to Hippocrates, midwives in ancient Greece were not only responsible for assisting in childbirth, but were also women with extensive life experience. They were involved in estimating the duration of pregnancy, determining the sex of the unborn child, and treating complications that arose during pregnancy. Additionally, they accumulated significant knowledge in diagnosing and treating women's illnesses. There were also specialized healers who focused on curing chronic diseases specific to women. Although it was generally frowned upon for women to engage in professional work, many of these specialized healers held official positions in public service at the time. In ancient Rome, midwifery became highly developed. These practitioners were not only involved in childbirth but also took care of their loved ones and nursed and nurtured infants and young children.

However, nursing was not always regarded as a field of scientific knowledge or as a specialized profession. On the contrary, it was often considered a lowly task, associated with undesirable or unpleasant aspects of human life. It was not until the mid-19th century that the field began to be studied formally and elevated to a level of scientific knowledge. The first person to do this was Florence Nightingale—an English social reformer, suffragist, and pioneer—who played a pivotal role in transforming nursing into a respected and professional discipline<sup>1</sup>.

Although Florence Nightingale produced dozens of works on nursing, her 1859 publication *Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not*, consisting of 13 chapters and 136 pages, holds a particularly special place. This work systematically presents the environmental theory of nursing practice. From its initial publication in 1859 until 1896, it was republished 28 times in England alone. Later, researchers have conducted numerous studies on this work. In addition to English, it has been translated into the languages of over 100 countries worldwide. Unfortunately, to this day, it has not been translated into Mongolian. Moreover, based on her writings and works, a significant school of thought and established interpretation has emerged to study Florence Nightingale's theory and intellectual legacy<sup>4</sup>.

Within the scope of this article, an attempt is made to summarize and analyze the development of nursing science in Mongolia, the role played by Florence Nightingale's works and ideas in that context, the necessity of translating and utilizing her writings in the Mongolian language, and the perspectives of students based on a survey conducted on these topics.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 300 students from three Mongolian universities offering professional training in nursing participated in the study. The survey instrument was structured into three main sections, encompassing ten questions. The data collection was carried out over a three-month period, from November 2024 to January 2025.

## III. DATA PROCESSING

A study was conducted through surveys with over 300 students to explore Florence Nightingale and the intellectual legacy she contributed to the field of nursing. The study included representatives from three universities: Enerel, Ach, and Etugen.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the survey indicate the perspectives of the participating nursing students regarding Florence Nightingale's intellectual legacy.

According to the findings, **58% of respondents (174 students)** highly appreciated Nightingale's contributions and role in nursing, while the remaining **42% (126 students)** either were unsure or did not value her legacy as highly.

When asked about the relevance of her work to their **career and professional development**, **66% of the students (198 participants)** responded that knowledge about Nightingale is **directly related to their professional growth**.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that **an overwhelming majority of the participants recognize and highly value the intellectual legacy of Florence Nightingale**.

Table 1 Research Findings

No	Variable	Result (%)
1	Appreciation of Nightingale's contribution	58% (Highly appreciated)
2	Relevance of Nightingale's research to professional development	66% (Directly related)

Source: Research Data

## V. CONCLUSION

The results of the study among 300 nursing students show that Florence Nightingale's intellectual legacy and her contributions to nursing science are highly valued. Specifically:

More than 6 out of 10 students (58%) highly appreciate her intellectual legacy.

Additionally, 6 out of 10 students (66%) believe that her research and knowledge directly impact their professional development.

These findings clearly demonstrate the significant role that Nightingale's ideas and research methods continue to play in modern nursing education and professional growth.

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