

# The Subjectivity for Closed Adoption of Nursing Students

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study is to review the subjectiveness of nursing students towards closed adoption and describe the characteristics of each type for categorization. Q-methodology was applied for this purpose. Nineteen students enrolled in the third or fourth year of the Department of Nursing Studies at A university were asked to categorize 42 statements on adoption. The collected data were analyzed using the QUANL PC Program. The analysis showed that nursing students' perception of closed adoption fell into three categories: co-existence of merits and disadvantages, focus on family, and pessimism about the future. The study was supplied as primary data for identifying nursing students' perceptions in clinical settings towards closed adoption and applying the findings to their education.*

**Keywords:** *Closed, Adoption, Nursing, Student, Subjectivity, Q methodology*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Necessity of study**

Closed adoption was often carried out at the request of the birth parents and adoptive parents to protect the birth parents, the child, and the adoptive parents from social stigma. Still, the social trend focuses on choice, disclosure, and the child's right to know. This has played a significant role in leading the adoption culture [1][2][3].

However, despite changes in the times and social awareness, whether to disclose or not the adoption depends on the situation and environment the family finds itself in. Appropriate choices are needed depending on the parents' or child's characteristics or temperament. The reason adoptive families choose to make it undisclosed is that there is an undesirable prejudice against adoption in Korea. When adoption becomes known, parents have to face the social stigma against infertility, while the child is likely to receive unfair treatment in society. This leads the families to choose a closed adoption. Sullivan and Lathrop note that genuine discourse on adoptive families is complex in a system where closed adoption is the norm, where the rights of the child to know are ignored, where the birth parents are not recognized for their identity, and where the adoptive parents need to suppress their sadness over infertility [4].

Closed adoption has become the norm in Korea and remains so. However, the lack of interest in closed adoptive families and the emphasis on the families' preference for keeping their lives private led to their adjustment process being little known. Families of closed adoption inform only a limited number of family members of the adoption,

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often leaving the child himself and other family members in the dark. As such, their perspective towards adoption would be different from that of families of disclosure adoption, and therefore, it would be meaningful to review the adjustment process the former undergoes.

Nurses not only take up the largest share of personnel in clinical settings but often have the most frequent contact with beneficiaries of medical services. They must provide safe and high-quality nursing within a limited time and in a fast-changing medical environment [5]. The subjectiveness of the nurse when addressing the patients affects the nursing activity. Therefore, it is essential to understand the perception of nurses or students aspiring to become nurses.

Studies on nursing students and their perception of closed adoption still need to be completed. Q-methodology allows for an understanding of the characteristics of each category by the subjective structure of people as it is a methodology that starts from the agent's perspective rather than the researcher's hypothesis [6][7]. Since the perception of nursing students toward closed adoption is a uniquely subjective experience, Q-methodology is an appropriate method to verify the types of perception.

As such, this study seeks to understand the subjective structure of closed adoption from the perspective of nurses to provide a set of primary data necessary for developing a differentiated education program for each type of perception towards closed adoption in nursing students before they start working in a clinical setting.

## **1.2. Purpose of study**

The study aims to apply Q-methodology to identify the subjective perception of nursing students towards closed adoption and the characteristics of each type to provide information on nursing students starting work on closed adoption to give a set of primary data that can be applied to teaching nursing students. Specific study goals are as follows.

- 1) The subjective perceptions of nursing students towards closed adoption are categorized.
- 2) The characteristics of each type of perception towards closed adoption are analyzed and described.

## **2. Method of study**

### **2.1. Design of the study**

This study aimed to identify the subjective perception of open adoption in nursing students who experienced open adoption after reviewing the literature, media data, and previous studies on open adoption.

### **2.2. Q population and Q sample selection**

To extract a comprehensive statement on the effect of open adoption, the Q population was derived from a review of domestic and foreign literature, an open questionnaire, and individual in-depth interviews focusing on current nursing students. Through this process, over 200 Q-populations from three domains were extracted, and in addition to that, by integrating the literature collected through the review of domestic

and foreign literature, a total of 100 Q populations were extracted. After reviewing and revising the extracted Q samples, the final 42 samples with high discriminative power were selected.

### **2.3. Design of study**

The Q-methodology is not a personal difference but qualitative research that emphasizes individual inertia by highlighting differences in meaning or importance within an individual, and it is based on the minor sample doctrine that when a P sample grows, several people are biased on one factor and their characteristics are not revealed [8]. The P sample consists of 19 students who are expected to participate in the study after fully explaining the purpose of the study to the students enrolled in the nursing department.

### **2.4. Classification and data analysis method**

The Q classification process is a process by which individuals who are selected as a P sample classify the statement of the Q sample as a forced standard distribution method, thereby creating a spontaneous definition of the companion animal by each individual. We collected data using the Q card for 25 OO College of Nursing students. The time required for one subject to complete the Q classification was 30-45 minutes. The distribution of the Q sample was classified from strong positive to strong negative in order of importance to the subjects' opinions. The statements on open adoption (Q1) were classified on a 12-point scale. Afterward, the subjects were interviewed about the statements classified at the extremes. The Q factor analysis used the Principal Component Factor Analysis, varimax. The type classification was selected based on the Eigenvalue of 1.0 or more, the number of factors, and the total explanatory variable. The collected data were scored from 1 to 15, with the conversion scores assigned to each, focused on the card distributed by the Q sample distribution table. The assigned conversion scores were coded in the Q sample order and processed by the principal factor analysis by the QUANL PC program. The QUANL PC program analyzed the data.

### **2.5. Ethical considerations for the subject**

After volunteer consent was obtained from the subjects before the study, we explained to the subjects that they could stop at any time during the study. To respect the rights of the subjects and ensure the confidentiality of the subject's privacy and information, all of the information collected through this study is treated as anonymous in the whole data analysis process and coded with Q sorting.

## **3. Result of the study**

Using the QUANL PC program, a Q factor analysis of the subjectiveness of nursing students toward closed adoption showed three types of categories.

- 'Co-existence of merits and disadvantages' type: They thought that regardless of whether the adoption is disclosed or not, forming an attachment relationship depends on the love and interest of the parents and that raising awareness through social and governmental programs can be helpful. They did not see adoption as something to be

embarrassed about or hide and considered both the merits and the disadvantages of closed adoption. The first type was named 'co-existence of merits and disadvantages.'

- 'Focus on family' type: They would be best advised to prepare in advance for situations where the adoption becomes known by the child or by friends and family. If the child is taught that adoption is not a negative thing, he can accept it without resistance at a later point when he learns of it. The subjects in this type focused on the reason for selecting closed adoption and saw it as a willingness to maintain the family line. As such, type 2 was named 'focus on family.'

- 'Pessimism about the future' type: This means that it is important to provide information about his adoption to the child through an open adoption while treating him like a blood family when bringing him up. Even if most adoptions are closed and lead to many disadvantages, adoption still needs to become mainstream. Behaviors to mimic pregnancy would also be unnecessary. As such, this third type was named 'pessimism about the future.'

Table 1. Q-statements on new nurse images type of representative items and Z-scores. (N=19)

Factor	No	Description	Mean (SD)	Z-score
Factor 1 (N=8)	37	Contact with the birth mother is avoided.	7.88(2.357)	1.99
	11	The character of the child, after learning of his adoption, changes negatively.	6.25(2.866)	1.76
	17	There is fear of the child being admitted to the hospital when a child of a different blood type is adopted.	6.38(1.996)	1.72
Factor 2 (N=5)	29	The parents suffer from undermined mental and physical energy.	7.80(1.924)	2.49
	7	The child can be brought up as if he is one's own.	7.20(2.387)	1.72
	17	There is fear of the child being admitted to the hospital when a child of a different blood type is adopted.	6.20(3.194)	1.50
Factor 3 (N=6)	9	The parents feel burdened to hide the adoption throughout their lives.	7.83(2.041)	2.35
	17	There is fear of the child being admitted to the hospital when a child of a different blood type is adopted.	5.33(2.251)	1.99
	1	There is fear that the child would learn of his adoption.	8.50(2.429)	1.63

#### 4. Discussion

This study categorized the subjective perceptions of nursing students toward closed adoption into three types. The study found that most nursing students were concerned about the confusion or pain that the adoptee could experience in a closed adoption. Despite such concerns, they believed that it is desirable to promote adoption in Korea and to help families of adoption through various programs. The three types were categorized based on their characteristics: co-existence of merits and disadvantages, focus on family, and pessimism about the future.

This study on subjectiveness can be used as primary data in developing an alternative to promote open adoption, which has increasingly garnered interest in recent years. Moreover, by presenting the subjective structure and characteristics of each type of perception in nursing students, the data can be used to develop a differentiated education program for future nurses.

However, the study is limited in that it only used one university as a subject and did not select the participants by considering all factors that affect the perception of closed

adoption. As such, the findings of this study cannot be generated. Additional verification on the type categories would be needed in a follow-up by composing a Q sample with subjects of more varied backgrounds.

## 5. Conclusion

This study was carried out by applying Q-methodology to provide primary data needed to explore measures for promoting closed adoption based on the data analyzing the subjective perceptions of nursing students towards closed adoption. The study found three factors in their perceptions - co-existence of merits and disadvantages, focus on family, and pessimism about the future.

In categorizing nursing students' subjectiveness towards closed adoption, this study provides primary data needed to adopt or apply policies to promote closed adoption. This researcher hopes that the study's findings can lead to the development of education programs that consider the characteristics of each category type. Moreover, qualitative research is suggested to verify the various factors that affect the nursing of children of closed adoption, as well as a follow-up study on the type categorization by using samples with multiple factors.

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