

# FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE AMONG STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOLS OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY IN AKURE

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## ABSTRACT

*Career decision making is a major step to take in everybody's life. It is the most important and several factors have been discovered to influence such decision making among individuals ranging from external factors, internal factors to rewards and characteristics of the profession. This study therefore examines factors affecting the choice of career among students of the schools of nursing and midwifery in Akure, Ondo State. A descriptive non experimental design was adopted and the total population of 216 students was used for this study. The instrument used was a self-developed questionnaire adapted from four case studies, consisting of four sections was used for this study. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means frequencies, percentages and the hypotheses tested using chi-square to determine the level of significance in the variables. The findings of this research reveal that the factors influencing choice of career are parents, nurse role model and books. The result of the hypotheses tested in this study show that there is a significant relationship between external factors and choosing nursing as a career, there is significant relationship between internal factors/rewards and the choice of nursing as a career and lastly, there is no significant difference relationship between gender and reasons for studying nursing. It is therefore recommended that positive image of the nursing profession be propagated via media such as television and radio programmes as well as in practice.*

**Keywords:** Factors: Career Choice: Nursing/Midwifery.

## INTRODUCTION

The choice of choosing a career is one of the most vital decisions that man has to make in his lifetime. Decision about a particular career pattern/choice can be tasking requiring time and money. However, the need to make a second decision in the nearest future in order to change from a current career/vocation to another can be burdensome and frustrating hence the need to make an appropriate decision at the initial step/attempt (Zohreh, Kobrah, Yadollah, and Nasrin 2013). This process of career decision begins from early childhood and climax during the last years of the senior secondary school in modern societies because of the family and societal expectations. However, in some countries, this process completes with the university entrance examination, which is necessary to enter the desired career. This is similar to what operates in Nigeria where one is admitted into the university to study a career of choice after passing the unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) (Tayebi, Dehghan-Nayeri, Negarandeh, and Shahbaz 2013).

Nurses, as the largest group of healthcare professionals, have a critical role in the healthcare system and thus in promoting individual and social health. It is obvious that the growth and development of nursing largely depends on the ability to recruit new nurses to the profession. However, our knowledge regarding the factors affecting one's decision to choose nursing as his future career is limited. There is virtually no disagreement with the suggestion that there is a serious nurse shortage worldwide (McLaughlin, Muldoon, and Moutray 2009). One of the greatest challenges for nurse managers in Western countries is to recruit and

retain motivated and well-prepared nurses (Kloster, HØie, and Skår 2007). Nurse migration is a global phenomenon with a dominant pattern of nurse migration from low-income to middle and high-income countries. Over the years the driving forces behind nurse migration has challenged nursing employers and focused the attention of international organizations such as the International Council of Nurses and the World Health Organization (Eman, Seamus and Edgar 2012; Tayebi et al., 2013).

In a profession like nursing or midwifery, the training programme is most concerned with developing as fully as possible each trainee's potentialities as a nurse or midwife. The choice of such a career should therefore be based on variables possessed by an individual that would enhance practice if finally admitted into the training programme. In other parts of the world, many reasons have been pointed out for choosing nursing as a career. Currently, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the most important factor is the desire to help people and care for others. However, concerns like higher income, having a sense of being different because of doing an important work, flexibility of working shifts, and presence of a nurse in the family are other determinants of entering nursing (Tayebi et al., 2013). Aside these there have been major changes in the mode of admitting medical students including nursing students into the University of their Choice in recent times around the world. In Nigeria, it is unfortunate to observe that many inappropriate career choices have been made by youngsters because of ignorance and illiteracy on their part, on one hand; and that of their parents, on the other. Some parents tend to have a fixed idea of the vocation their children should choose irrespective of the child's intelligence, interest and other capabilities. Such wrong choices, whether due to parental pressures or some other considerations, have driven the youth into untold psychological problems, some of which have marred their future prospects (Kinanee 2009).

Several factors have been identified to influence the decision of students to be a nurse or to choose the nursing profession. These factors range from altruism, high income, job security, employment opportunities, influence of parents, teacher, counsellor, books, the media, relatives who are nurses, positive image of nurses, nurse role model shift duty among others (Larsen et al 2003; Kinanee 2009; Eley 2010; Tayebi et al 2013; & Zohreh 2013). Understanding why the graduates from the high schools choose nursing is essential for the health policy makers in each country (Zohreh et al 2013). It becomes imperative to determine whether students' perceptions of nursing accurately describe academic programs and the nursing profession (Cockrell 2002). If those reasons are understood, more appropriate recruitment strategies can be developed, instead of generic approach, typically used in recruitment (Larsen, McGill, and Palmer 2003).

A more effective selection process and strategies to enhance the retention of student nurses and new nurses are vital in order to address both the high attrition rate of nursing students and the current nursing shortage (McLaughlin et al., 2009). "An understanding of students'" perception and its evolvement during the course of the study can assist nurse educators in evaluating the educational program's strengths and weaknesses. This understanding can enhance curricular development towards a caring and holistic paradigm of nursing. Moreover, it will add to the body of knowledge of nursing education, especially in relation to admission processes, by examining specific personal factors that influence students' perceptions" (Safadi et al 2011). Given the foregoing, this study sets out to examine the factors affecting the choice of careers among students of the schools of nursing and midwifery in Akure, Ondo State.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the factors affecting the choice of career among students of the schools of nursing and midwifery in Akure, Ondo State?

## HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant relationship between external factor and the choice of the nursing career.
2. There is no significant relationship between intrinsic reward and the choice of the nursing career.
3. There is no significant relationship between gender and reasons for studying nursing.

## METHODOLOGY

In this research, a descriptive non experimental design was used. The research settings are the schools of Nursing and Midwifery, Akure. They are both located in the Akure South Local Government Area within same compound in Alagbaka area of Akure, behind Governor's office, adjacent to Ondo State House of representatives (Ondo State Senate building) Igbatoro road. The schools of Nursing and Midwifery are institutions that run a three (3) year programmes with a maximum intake of fifty (50) students in year 1. The school of Nursing is a mixture of both male and female students while school of Midwifery has only female students. At the time of this research, the school of Midwifery have only two levels in session (3 and 1) with 46 students and 50 students respectively. The school of Nursing has a total of 150 students in this academic session.

Thus, both schools have the total number of 150 and 96 students respectively, the total number of 216 students were available. The total number of 216 students participated in this study. A Self-structured questionnaire which

was adapted from four case studies namely; Bakare (1977), Motivation for occupational preference scale; Larsen et al., (2003); Eley et al., (2010) and Eman et al., (2012); and same was distributed to the students consisting of four sections made of both opened and closed ended questions. Section A: socio-demographic data. Section B: external factors influencing career choice. The variables were scored and mean score was 11.76. Lowest through 11 were tagged "not influential", while 12 through highest was tagged "influential". Section C: internal factors influencing career choice. The variables in this category was scored, the mean score was 27.97 and lowest through 28 was tagged "not influential" while 29 through highest was tagged "influential". Section D: alternative career choices. To test for the third hypothesis, all the variables in section B and C were scored and cross tabulated as the "reasons" that influence gender choice in career decision. Lowest through 79.9 was tagged "not influential" and 80 through highest was tagged "influential".

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means frequencies, percentages and the hypotheses tested using chi-square to determine the level of significance in the variables. The variables were scored and the mean was determined. Scores above the mean was tagged as "influential" while scores below the mean were tagged as "not influential". Not influential means that variables in each category did not influence the career choice/decision of the students while influential is vice-versa.

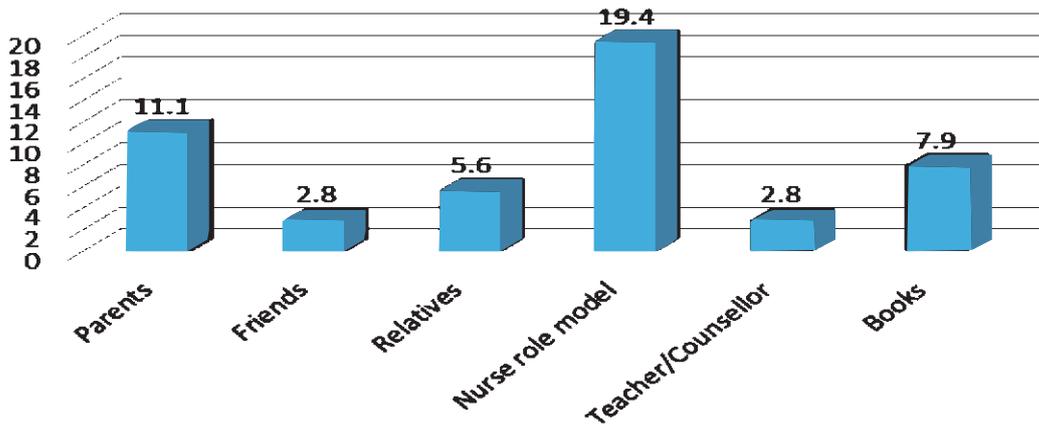
## RESULTS

### Research question

What are the factors affecting the choice of career among students of the schools of nursing and midwifery in Akure, Ondo State?

Factors affecting the career choice of students of Schools of Nursing and Midwifery in Akure, Ondo State are parents (11.10%), friends (2.8%) relatives (5.60%), nurse role model

(19.40%), teacher/counsellor (2.80%) and books (7.90%). According to the findings of this research, the factors influencing career choice are parents, nurse role model and books.



**Fig 1: Factors influencing career choice**

**Hypothesis one**

There is no significant relationship between external factor and the choice of the nursing career. A little above average (61.6%) agrees that external factors influenced their decision in choosing nursing as a career. There is a

significant relationship between external factors and the choice of nursing as a career since the  $p < 0.05$  hence the hypothesis is restated as there is a significant relationship between external factors and choosing nursing as a career.

**TABLE 1**  
**Nursing as a Career Choice \* External Factors**

		External factors		Total
		Not Influential	Influential	
Initial career choice	Yes	38 (38.4%)	61 (61.6%)	99
	No	67 (66.3%)	34 (33.7%)	101
Total		105	95	200*

\* Missing 16       $\chi^2=16.573$        $p= .000$

**Hypothesis two**

There is no significant relationship between intrinsic reward and the choice of the nursing career. Table 2 shows that Sixty-five per cent of the respondents agree that internal factors/rewards influenced their decision to

choose nursing as a career. The level of significance ( $p=0.000$ ) is less than 0.05 hence there is significant relationship between internal factors/rewards and the choice of nursing as a career.

**TABLE 2**  
**Nursing as a Career Choice \* Internal Rewards**

		Intrinsic Factors/Rewards		Total
		Not Influential	Influential	
Initial career choice	Yes	34 (34.7%)	64 (65.3%)	98
	No	71 (72.4%)	27 (27.6%)	98
Total		105	91	196*

\* Missing 20       $\chi^2=28.965$        $p=0.000$

**Hypothesis three**

There is no significant relationship between gender and reasons for studying nursing. Fifty-five per cent of the female respondents reported to be influenced by the following reasons (external factors, internal factors and characteristics of the profession) for choosing

nursing as a career while 68 (38.2%) are not influenced by same factors. Similar for male respondents 7 (3.9%) are influenced while 5 (2.8%) are not influenced by same reasons. The level of significance ( $p=0.594$ ) is greater than 0.05 hence the result is not significant.

**TABLE 3**  
**Reasons for studying nursing**

		Reasons for Studying Nursing		Total	$\chi^2/P$ val
		Not Influential	Influential	F(N=216)	
Gender	Female	68(38.2%)	98(55.1%)	188	$\chi^2=0.002$ $p=0.594$
	male	5(2.8%)	7(3.9%)	14	
Total		73(41.0%)	105(59.0%)	178*	

\* Missing 38

**DISCUSSION**

This study assesses the factors that influence or affect students' choice in making nursing their major or career choice. According to the findings of this research, the factors influencing choice of career are parents, nurse role model and books. These finding is supported by the following studies; Larsen et al., 2003 who reports a significant relationship between having the experience of a nurse role model and consideration of nursing as a career. It is well stated that in a study comparing nursing and non-nursing students, exposure to nurses, either as a nursing major or having a relative who is a nurse, correlated with

students' view of nursing as an enjoyable career. Zohreh et al., (2013) impact of family and friends in the nursing profession, positive images of nurses are some of the reasons for choosing nursing as a major or a career. In a research conducted among dental nursing students in Benin City, 50.6% are influenced in their choice of career strongly by their parents (Azodo, Ezeja and Ehizele 2009).

The result of this study reveals that there is a significant relationship between external factors and choosing nursing as a career. This result is supported by Tayebi et al., (2013) who report that in other parts of the world, many reasons have been pointed out for choosing

nursing as a career. Currently, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the most important factor is the desire to help people and care for others. However, concerns like higher income, having a sense of being different because of doing an important work, flexibility of working shifts, and presence of a nurse in the family are other determinants of entering nursing.

This study observes that there is significant relationship between internal factors/rewards and the choice of nursing as a career. The finding of this research is supported by an Iranian study which reveal that in other parts of the world, many reasons have been pointed out for choosing nursing as a career. Currently, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the most important factor is the desire to help people and care for others (Kinanee 2009; Tayebi et al., 2013). In a similar study of the expectations of young nurses with regard to their job, Cooman, Pepermans, Bois, Caers and Jegers (2008) indicates that altruism is a recurrent factor in addition to other traditional attractions. In another study, participants perceived nursing as caring, helping people and a humanitarian job (Eman et al., 2012). In yet another study conducted in Australia, self-interest, vocation and altruism are identified by both students and nurses as the main reasons for entering nursing (Eley, Eley, and Rogers-Clark 2010; Zohreh et al 2013). Furthermore, another study of the motivation for the choice of nursing and teaching careers among students carried out by Toth (2008) shows that the primary motivation is of altruistic nature as supported by Tayebi et al., 2013 most of the studies shows altruistic tendencies and caring for others as the main reasons for entering nursing. In a study conducted in Benin City, Nigeria among 85 dental nursing students from 3 Colleges of Technology between the periods of 2008-2009,

it is reported that the major reason for choosing dental nursing career is because it affords them the opportunity of caring for the health of others (Azodo, Ezeja and Ehizele 2009).

This study reveals that there is no significant difference relationship between gender and reasons for studying nursing. This result corresponds with the findings of Kinanee (2009) that no significant influence of gender on the factors motivating the choice of the nursing career. Respondents from both sexes seemed to have been motivated into the nursing career by similar factors. This indicates that internal variables like self-expression and people-oriented values have overriding influence on people opting for the nursing profession, irrespective of gender.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found out that almost the same or similar factors have interested both male and female respondents in their choice of career whether external or internal as revealed by the third hypothesis. Respondents from both sexes seem to have been motivated into the nursing career by similar factors. The place of nurse role model or positive image of nurses and the nursing profession in the recruitment and retention of nursing students and nurses is of utmost importance in nursing education and the delivery of quality care in the health system.

It is therefore recommended that positive image of the nursing profession be propagated via media such as television and radio programmes as well as in practice. The stake holders in the nursing profession; the Ministry of Health, the Nurse educator, the clinician (staff nurse) in the hospital should put in joint effort to promote the image of nurses and the nursing profession in Nigeria.

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