SOCIOECONOMIC INFLUENCE ON CHOICE OF NURSING CAREER AND NURSING INSTITUTIONS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS IN IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined factors influencing nursing students' choice of nursing career and institution in Imo State. The researcher adopted a descriptive design for the study. The population of the study comprised 2484 student nurses and a sample size of 380 was selected which was determined using Taro Yamane formula. Socioeconomic factors influencing their choice of nursing institution and nursing career include income of parents, educational attainment of parents, cost of education, cost of living in the area where institution of learning is situated, social class and associated opportunities/limitations etc (mean= 3.09); economic conditions, industry trends, job availability, school location, job market demand etc are environmental factors that influence their choices of nursing career (mean=3.14) and demographic variables of gender, age, occupation of parents, education of parents and income of family significantly relate to/predict the individual factors ($p<.05$), socioeconomic factors ($p<.05$) influencing student nurses' choice of nursing career and nursing institutions. The researcher recommends among others that individual preferences of students be considered when designing aptitude tests for aspiring nursing students.

KEYWORDS: Socioeconomic factors, nursing career, nursing institutions, nursing students.

INTRODUCTION

Career selection is one of the many important choices students will make in determining future plans. This decision will impact them throughout their lives. Paul[1] clearly explains that career choices may be more difficult today than at any time in history, bearing in mind that there is infinitely more to choose from, and the levels of expectation are rising every other day. According to WHO[2] nursing students career choice entails a huge decision and it can be daunting. Paul[1] clearly explains that career choices may be more difficult today than at any time in history, bearing in mind that there is infinitely more to choose from, and the levels of expectation are rising every other day. In fact, career choice involves life's decisions because it determines one's fulfillment, future happiness, income, choice of friends, dressing code, influence in society and the amount of risk to which a person is exposed to, just like a life partner and therefore it should not be a trial and error exercise.

Many young individuals find nursing very laborious because it is time and attention demanding. Student choice to continue with the nursing field could be affected either negatively or positively depending on their level of performance and success in their chosen career.[3] Emeghebo[4] revealed that there is less interest in the nursing profession by school leavers than there was in the past and the methods to identify and guide appropriate students into nursing career are lacking. Moreover, young people entering the nursing profession are more likely than their predecessors to withdraw from nursing even if it was their first choice.[5] Furthermore, the lack of readiness of students to embark on a nursing career and lack of support for students in making a career choice affects their studies because sometimes students need to change their programme several times and this has an adverse effect on their future employment.[6] The purpose of this study was to assess socio economic factors influencing nursing career choices and choice of nursing institution among nursing students in Imo State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is a descriptive design.

Area of Study
The area of study is Imo State. Imo State is one of the 36 States of Nigeria, located in the southeast region of the country.

Target Population
The population targeted was all student nurses in the seven (7) Nursing institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. The total population is about two thousand four hundred and eighty-four (2,484) student nurses (Director of Nursing Sciences State Ministry of Health, 2024).

Inclusion criteria
Willingness to participate in the study

Sample Size and Sample Technique
The Taro Yamane method is selecting sample size was used to select nursing students from the seven (7) Nursing institution in Imo State. The sample size will be determined for a limited population using Yaro Yamane's statistical formular as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+N\,(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2,484}{(1+2,484\,(0.05)^2}$$

n =   344.5 =345

10% attrition rate =34.5 =35

So sample   the sample size will be 380

Sampling Procedure
Stratified random sampling tech nique was used to divide population in seven (7) strata.   Seven (7) institutions were randomly selected.

Secondly, simple random sampling technique was used to select participant within each institution.

Stage one: a basket containing folded pieces of paper written Yes' or No' were reshuffled for the participant (student nurses) in each institution. Those who picked 'Yes' were selected until a total number of three hundred and eighty (380) nursing students were reached which represents the 15.3% of population of each school sample size.

Instrument for Data Collection
The data was collected using the questionnaire which was constructed by the researcher based on the study. The questionnaire was reviewed in line with relevant literature, and approved by the research supervisor. It was constructed to allow respondents choose and tick answers which they feel are most appropriate to their lived experience.

The questionnaire is in three sections of A, B C and D. Section A is demographic data containing five (5) items such as gender, age, occupational status of parents, parents level of education and family income. Section B contains nine (9) items on various possible individual factors influencing nursing career choices and choice of nursing institutions. Section C contains eleven (11) items the socio economic factors influencing nursing career choices and choice of nursing institutions. Section D contains on twelve (12) items on environment factors influencing nursing career choices and choice of nursing institutions.

Validity of the Instrument
The research instrument was developed and was given to the project supervisor for constructive critics and to assess whether it was capable of collecting the required data, thereafter corrections were made. The questionnaire was returned to the project supervisor for approval.

Reliability of the Instrument
The instrument was checked for reliability over time, and that the contents have internal consistency. The test-retest reliability was used to measure the correlation coefficient between the variables, where a pre-test also used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Ten copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the student nurses in Merit School of Nursing, Orlu who are not part of the study population (respondents) and same were collected after. Ten days later, the same but fresh copies of the questionnaire were distributed again to the same student nurses. The results were collected, tallied and analyzed using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient which yielded positive correlation with value of 0.90 which indicates high reliability.

Method of Data Collection
The researcher intimated the heads of nursing institutions in Imo State the purpose for carrying out a study in their schools. With the permission of the heads, and letter of approval from them, the researcher ensured that the letter of approval was read to student nurses before the administration of the instrument. The researcher also introduced herself to the student nurses, and explained the purpose of the study to them. An informed consent from volunteering respondents was obtained before administering the questionnaire to them.

The total number of three hundred and eight (380) questionnaires were distributed manually and electronically to the student nurses in all seven (7) Nursing institutions in Imo State.

Method of Data Analysis
The responses to the questionnaire were tallied and coded manually by the researcher. The data collected were organized and analyzed using tables, frequencies, percentages and charts to show the distribution off items in each response. The chi-square analysis was used to determine the significant relationship between the variables. This enabled the researcher to either accept or reject the research hypotheses.

RESULTS
Table 1: Demographic data of respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	87	22.90
	Female	293	77.10
Age bracket (in years)	< 18	0	0
	18-22	206	54.20
	23-27	145	38.20
	28 -32	29	7.60
	33 and above	0	0
Parents' occupation	Medical personnel	58	15.30
	Lawyer	0	0
	Teacher	58	15.30
	Business man/woman	264	69.40
	Banker	0	0
	Others	0	0
Parents' level of education	None	0	0
	Primary	0	0
	Secondary	146	38.40
	Tertiary	234	61.60
Average family income (in naira)	Below 50,000	30	7.90
	50,000-100,000	58	15.30
	100,000- 140,000	89	23.40
	150,000-199,000	58	15.30
	200,000 and above	145	38.10

Data on table 1 show the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The data show that majority of the respondents are females (77.10%). The dominant age bracket among the respondents is 18-22 years (54.20%). Majority of the respondents have their parents' occupation as business men/women (69.40%). All the respondents have parents who have received some sort of education viz 61.60% of tertiary graduates and 38.40% secondary school leavers. Finally, majority of the respondents' family earn an average monthly income of 200,000 naira and above (38.10%).

Table 2: socio economic factors influencing nursing career choices and choice of nursing institution among nursing students in Imo State.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Remark
1	Income level of parents	232	89	59	0	3.45	0.73	Agree
2	Educational attainment of parents	116	118	146	0	2.92	0.82	Agree
3	Availability of quality educational institution	116	147	87	30	2.91	0.91	Agree
4	Social class and associated opportunities/limitations	174	147	29	30	3.22	0.89	Agree
5	High employment rate	175	117	88	0	3.22	0.80	Agree
6	Opportunity for career progression and advancement	147	116	117	0	3.07	0.83	Agree
7	Career prospects	118	203	59	0	3.15	0.66	Agree
8	Cost of education	116	176	58	30	2.99	0.88	Agree
9	Opportunity to work while in school	145	205	0	30	3.22	0.80	Agree
10	Cost of living in the area where school is located	87	175	88	30	2.83	0.86	Agree
	Cumulative mean					**3.09**		

Data on table 2 show the responses of the student nurses on the socioeconomic factors influencing their choice of nursing institution and nursing career. All the items in the scale have their mean scores above 2.50, with lower standard deviation scores, implying homogenous responses across the items. The cumulative mean is given as 3.09. This implies that majority of the respondents are in acceptance that the following are socioeconomic factors influencing their choice of nursing institution and nursing career: income of parents,

educational attainment of parents, cost of education, cost of living in the area where institution of learning is situated, social class and associated opportunities/limitations etc.

DISCUSSION

Findings from research question 2 showed that the socioeconomic factors influencing their choice of nursing institution and nursing career: income of parents, educational attainment of parents, cost of education, cost of living in the area where institution of learning is situated, social class and associated opportunities/limitations etc (mean= 3.09). The corresponding hypothesis also reveal that demographic variables of age, gender, occupation and education level of parents and parents' income significantly relates to the socioeconomic factors influencing student nurses' choices of nursing institution.

This finding is in line with that of Mohammad[7] who carried out a study to establish the factors influencing nursing students' decision to choose the nursing education program in Bulgaria and found out that social and economic determinants such as educational attainment of parents and cost of education were factors which determine students' choice of career. The finding further showed significant relationship between socio-demographic factors and factors influencing students' choice of career.

Also supporting the findings above are the findings of Pilot and Regis[8] who carried out a study on Socio-demographic Factors Influencing Career Decision-making among Undergraduate Psychology Students in South Africa and found out that type and location of school attended and parents' level of education influenced career decisions among students.

CONCLUSION

Motives for selecting nursing as a career path are highly consistent across various qualitative interviews and empirical surveys of nursing students and current nurses. It is no doubt that a lot of students are motivated by various factors such as interest in the nursing profession, their academic strengths and previous work experiences. Also motivating students' choice of career can be the environment in which they find themselves, their social settings and characteristics of their guardians/parents. The nursing career has grown overtime and drawn attention of many people.

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