

# Perception of Undergraduate Nursing Students About Nursing Profession: A Study of University of Jos, Nigeria

Oyedele Emmanuel A.<sup>1</sup>, Emmanuel Andy<sup>1,\*</sup>, Gaji Luka D.<sup>2</sup>, Goshit Jidauna D.<sup>1</sup>, Louis Okonkwo I.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Nursing Science, Faculty of Medical Sciences University of Jos. Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>College of Nursing and Midwifery, Jos, Plateau state, Nigeria

## Email address

andyemma62@yahoo.com (E. Andy)

## To cite this article

Oyedele Emmanuel A., Emmanuel Andy, Gaji Luka D., Goshit Jidauna D., Louis Okonkwo I.. Perception of Undergraduate Nursing Students About Nursing Profession: A Study of University of Jos, Nigeria. *International Journal of Nursing and Health Science*. Vol. 2, No. 5, 2015, pp. 60-63.

## Abstract

The perception of nursing by the public plays an important role in determining the choice of nursing as a profession by young people. Understanding the perception of nursing students about their profession will help in identifying misconceptions and information that could be helpful in planning public enlightenment about the profession. A descriptive study design was adopted and information was retrieved from 162 respondents. Students participated voluntarily and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Findings indicated that all respondents believe that nursing is a noble profession and admired by many people in the society. They also believe that nursing is stressful. Most respondents choose nursing as a profession because of job security, good pay, self-actualization, and love for the profession. Fewer students were influenced by contact with practicing nurses, friends, parents and family. It was concluded that undergraduate nursing students in university of Jos have a positive perception about nursing. There is need for nurses and other stakeholder to project the image of nursing profession in the society.

## Keywords

Perception, Nursing Profession, Undergraduate Students, University of Jos

## 1. Introduction

Nursing is known to be a profession responsible for the protection, promotion and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations (Royal college of Nursing 2003). The image of nursing has changed and developed throughout history, and the outward image of nursing has improved remarkably within the past 50 years (El-Halen, Hawashy, El-Dein 2010).

Some countries in the Middle East, such as Bahrain and Jordan, were satisfied with the image of nursing but still lacked appeal and prestige. Jordan has had a unique experience in improving its nursing image and has significantly increased the number of highly educated nurses who participated actively in organizing the profession by

setting the Jordanian code of ethics (Raghda 2005).

Students have a wide range of pre-existing perceptions about nursing. A study of 1000 American nursing students reported that students believed nursing to be physically challenging and that there is inadequate respect and recognition of nursing (Buerhaus, Donelan, Norman, and Dittus, 2005). Other studies reported that nursing students recognize as a caring profession and as an opportunity to help people gain a better health. Nursing students also viewed nursing as a noble and well-regarded career path and one which requires strength, patience and compassion (Beck 2012). Apart from the traditional perception of nursing as caring, a longitudinal study that examined nursing student's perception of nursing as a profession based on scientific knowledge and required expertise in nursing and responsibility (Buerhaus et al 2005).

A study done in Riode Janeiro by Spindola Seibert, Francisco, and Clos (2005), of 62 high school students indicated that the students associated the nurse figure to the

assisting function and they visualize nurse as an auxiliary of the physician and that they were not aware of the different categories of the nursing profession and the education level of the profession. Another perception about nursing is that it is regarded as a career more suitable for females than males. This was discovered in a study carried out at the university of Ontario Canada (Bartfay, Clow and Wu 2010).

The reasons students choose to study nursing are firstly, the education and career aspirations which include the students' belief that nursing is their choice of career and that there is advancement in the nursing career or nursing education (Tan-kuick & Ng 2010). The Second reason is the personal ability which is the stress management, motivation, perseverance and self-confidence, Third reason is the socio-economic state of the nursing profession. Its interaction with the social and economic set up cannot be over emphasized.

Young people come into the nursing profession because of the great job security and opportunity for continuing education; availability of variety of roles, flexibility of job and unconditional and selfless service to humanity (International Council For Nursing,2010; Vanhanen & Janhonen 2000; Glacken & O'brien 200)

A study by Neilson and Lauder (2008) reported that the main factor that entices young college and University leavers into career in Nursing is inner motivation to care and help the sick. In a descriptive study done by Tan-Kuick and Nig. (2011), it was reported that many students conceive a view that nursing is a low status profession that does not generally command respect leading to the notion that Nursing is not good choice for higher studies.

It was posited in a study that nursing students were generally perceived by the society as stereotypes, that male nurses are for example gay, effeminate, less compassionate and less caring, hence it is frequently perceived as a woman's job (Bartfay, Bartfay, and Clow 2010).

The influence of parents plays a substantial part on the perception of undergraduate nursing students about the nursing profession. It has been discovered that the perception of these students were significantly influenced by parental drive (Bartfay, Bartfay, and Clow 2010). Another significant factor is the influence of peers who also inform their understanding, orientation and awareness of the nursing profession. These undergraduate nursing students are also influenced by their school counselors in their choice of nursing as a career (Neilson and Lauder 2008).

The perception of nursing students in University of Jos about nursing profession is not known. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the perception of

undergraduate nursing students about the nursing profession with a view to establishing baseline information that will be helpful in designing intervention that will promote the image of nursing and motivate the students.

## 2. Research Design

A cross sectional design was adopted for this study. The study was conducted among undergraduates in the Department of Nursing science, University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

A validated instrument was distributed to 162 students who participated voluntarily. Permission was obtained from the student affairs division and the Department of nursing before commencing the study. Participants were assured of confidentiality of all information supplied and anonymity was maintained. The data collected was analyzed using frequency tables, and percentages.

## 3. Results

*Table 1. Socio demographic variables.*

Variables	Frequency (N-162)	Percentages
Gender		
Male	85	52.5
Female	77	47.5
Level of study		
200	39	24.1
300	37	22.8
400	40	24.7
500	46	28.4
Age		
16-20	31	19.1
21-25	56	34.6
26-30	40	24.7
More than 30	35	21.6

The table above shows that out of 162 respondents, 85 (52.5%) are male while 77 (47.5%) are female, which means that the number of male respondents was slightly greater than their female counterpart.

The result in table above shows that 39 (24.1%) of the respondents were in 200L, 37(22.8%) were in 300L, 40(24.7%) were in 400L and 46(28.4%) were in 500L

Table above shows that 31 (19.1%) of the respondents, were between the ages of 16-20, 56 (34.6%) were between ages 21-25, 40 (24.7%) were between 26-30yrs and 35 (21.6%) were 30 years and above.

*Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on perception of undergraduate Nursing students about the nursing profession.*

Questions	Responses					Total
	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Nursing is a noble profession	105 (64.8%)	57(35.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	162 (100)
Nursing is admired by many people in the society	52 (32.1%)	55 (33.9%)	29 (17.9%)	26 (16.1%)	0	162 (100)
Nursing is frequently viewed as a vocation	31 (19.1%)	42 (25.9%)	33 (20.4%)	30 (18.5%)	26 (16.1%)	162 (100)
Nursing is the single most important frontline health work.	39 (24.1%)	38 (23.4%)	33 (20.4%)	31 (19.1%)	21 (13%)	162 (100)

Questions	Responses					Total
	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
The view of people about nursing does not affect reality about nursing	41 (25.3%)	47 (29%)	27 (16.7%)	23 (14.2%)	24 (14.8%)	162 (100)
Good job security offers positive view about the choice of nursing.	39 (24.1%)	49 (30.2%)	30 (18.5%)	22 (13.6%)	22 (13.6%)	162 (100)
Good pay in nursing offers positive view about the choice of nursing.	39 (24.1%)	46 (28.4%)	31 (19.5%)	23 (14.2%)	23 (14.2%)	162 (100)
Self-actualization is one of the most important reasons for your choice of nursing.	36 (22.2%)	45 (27.7%)	33 (20.4%)	27 (16.7%)	21 (13%)	162 (100)
Contact with a practising nurse influences your choice of nursing	30 (18.5%)	43 (26.6%)	34 (21%)	30 (18.5%)	25 (15.4%)	162 (100)
Friends , parents and family members influence your choice of nursing	24 (14.8%)	34 (21%)	30 (18.5%)	41 (25.3%)	33 (20.4%)	162 (100)
I choose nursing because I love it.	38 (23.4%)	42 (25.9%)	29 (17.9%)	30 (18.5%)	23 (14.2%)	162 (100)
The nursing profession is very stressful.	47 (29%)	44 (27.2%)	25 (15.4%)	24 (14.8%)	22 (13.6%)	162 (100)
Higher academic attainment is feasible with this profession	58 (35.8%)	48 (29.6%)	30 (18.5%)	26 (16.1%)	0 (0%)	162 (100)

From the result in table 2, 105 (64.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 57 (35.2%) agreed that nursing is a noble profession. With respect to whether nursing is admired by many people in the society, 107 (66%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 26 (16.1%) disagreed while 29 (17.9%) of the respondents were neutral. 73(45%) either agreed or strongly agreed that nursing is frequently viewed as a vocation, 56 (34.6%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 33 (20.4%) were neutral about it.

Seventy-seven (47.5%) students either agreed or strongly agreed that nursing is the single most important front line health work, 52 (32.1%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 33 (20.4%) of the respondents were neutral. Eighty-eight (54.3%) were either in agreement or strong agreement that the view of people about nursing does not reflect reality about nursing, 47 (29%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 27 (16.7%) were neutral. Most (88, 54.3%) either agreed or strongly agreed that good job security offers positive view about the choice of nursing, 44 (27.2%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 30 (18.5%) were neutral. Eighty five (52.5%) either agreed or strongly agreed that good pay in nursing offers positive view about their choice of nursing, 46 (28.4%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 31 (19.1%) were neutral.

Eighty-one (49.9%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that self-actualization is one of the most important reasons for their choice of nursing, 48 (29.7%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 33(20.4%) were neutral. Seventy-three (45.1%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that contact with a practicing nurse influenced their choice of nursing, 55 (33.9%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 34 (21%) were neutral. Fifty-eighty (35.8%) of the respondentseither agreed or strongly agreed that friends, parents and family members influenced their choice of nursing, 74 (45.7%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 30 (18.5%) were neutral.

Eighty (49.3%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they chose nursing because they love it, 53 (32.7%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 29

(17.9%) were neutral. Concerning the nursing profession being very stressful, 91 (56.2%) either agreed or strongly agreed, 46 (28.4%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 25 (15.4%) were neutral.

Finally, 106 (65.4%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that higher academic attainment is feasible with this profession, 26 (16.1%) disagreed, while 30 (18.5%) were neutral.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

The number of male respondents (52.5%) which is more than the female respondents (47.5%) is an indication of the fact that more males are coming into nursing profession. More males are required to join the profession in order to change the current stereotype.

All participants posited that nursing is a noble profession and consistent with Beck (2012) who reported that nursing is a noble and well-regarded career. The 100% percent response in support of nobility of nursing could be attributed to the population. The findings may differ if the study was among students from other departments or from the society.

A significant proportion (47.5%) of students agreed that nursing is the single most important frontline health work. This is contrary to the result obtained by Spindola et al 2005, in there study in Rio de Janeiro, they reported that the students associated the nurse figure to the assisting function and auxillary of the physician. Most of the respondents agreed that there is good job security, good pay and self-actualization in nursing. The general perception upon these indices, by the undergraduate nursing students, is consistent with Tan-Kuick and Ng (2011).

More than half of the respondents perceived the profession as being stressful. This discovery from the undergraduate nursing students is in support of the study done by Buerhaus et al. (2005). Assisting nursing students in stress management could reduce stress and change students' perception about nursing being a stressful profession. Finally, regarding the feasibility of higher academic attainment in Nursing, most of the respondents agree that there is opportunity for continuing

education in nursing. This could be a strong motivation to many students.

## 5. Conclusion

From this study, it is concluded that student's perception about the nursing profession has been more to the positive side than the negative side. This may be strongly attributed to the of type setting. Further study is warranted among youths who are not yet enrolled into nursing program.

## Recommendation

1. Nursing associations should and ministry of health should create awareness about nursing among learners from secondary schools using mass/electronic media.
2. Promotion of nursing career through media in order to reach out to all community members.
3. Practicing nurses should help in influencing young school leavers in choosing nursing as a career.
4. There should be a mechanism in place to encourage learners who would like to choose nursing as a career. The mechanism should include marketing the profession to all schools in collaboration between ministry of health and the associations of nurse in the country.

## References

- [1] Bartfay W.J Bartfay, E, and Clow K. (2010). Attitudes and perceptions towards men in nursing education. *Internet Journal of allied Health Sciences and Practice*. 8(2) 20-24.
- [2] Beck C. (2012). The experience of choosing nursing as a career. *Sciedu press*. Vol. 2 No.3. page 320-322.
- [3] Buerhaus P. Donelan. K., Norman L. and Dittus R. (2005). Nursing students perceptions of a career in nursing and impact of a national campaign designed to attract people into Nursing profession. *Journal of professional nursing*; 21 (2): 75-83.
- [4] El-Halem, A., Hawashy, EL and El-Dein, G (2011). Undergraduate male Nursing Student's perception about the image of the Nursing profession. *Journal of American science*; 7(3): 614-623
- [5] Glacken, M. and O'Brien, F. (2008). Choosing Nursing as a career. *A qualitative study of Nurse Education* 50(28) 385-392.
- [6] International Council of Nurses (2010). Factors associated with students orientations of nursing, *Journal of advanced Nursing*, 31 (5), 1055-1089.
- [7] Neilson G.R. Lauder, W. (2008). What do high academic school pupils really think about nursing. Analysis of the narrative from paradigmatic case interviews. *Nursing education today*; 26,(6):680-690.
- [8] Prater & McEwen (2006) Called to Nursing. Perceptions of student nurses. *Journal of holistic Nursing*; 24 (1):80-83.
- [9] Raghda, S (2005). Status of Nursing in the Arab world. *Ethnicity and disease*; 15: 101-105.
- [10] Royal College of Nursing (2013). Defining Nursing. Published by the royal college of Nursing. Accessed on 28 Aug, 2012.
- [11] Spindola T., Seibert, S., Francisco, M. and Clos, A. (2005). The view of high school students regarding what is to be a nurse (Portuguese). *Revista Enfermagem UERJ*. 13(3), 361-6.
- [12] Tan-Kuick & Ng (2010). Influences on student's choice of Nursing. Education in Singapore. An exploratory study. *Journal of Applied Business and management studies Vol. 1, 1*.
- [13] Vanhanen, L. and Janhonen, S. (2000). Factor associated with students Orientations to nursing. Pp 1055.