

Motivators and Barriers to the Pursuit of Advanced Nursing Education in Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nursing is a profession that keeps evolving in order to improve care for persons, families and communities as a whole. Education is an important tool of training and retraining these professionals in order to make them keep up with the pace of practice and consequently improve outcome of the healthcare system. Thus, a need to understudy advanced nursing education motivators and barriers in Nigeria.

Study Aim: This study was aimed at finding motivators and barriers to the pursuit of advanced nursing education in a teaching hospital in Nigeria.

Methodology: This is a descriptive correlation study conducted to identify factors that promote and deter nurses from the pursuit of advanced nursing education in Nigeria. The population was made up of nurses from a teaching hospital in Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 180 elements from the population. Data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 18(SPSS 18).

Results: Findings showed that majority of nurses were interested in advanced nursing education. However, the tuition fees for such education was high. The findings also showed that job security, increased salary, and promotion were motivators for the pursuit of advanced nursing education.

Conclusion: The study concluded that job incentives, job security, increased salary, and promotion are motivators for the pursuit of advanced nursing education while cost of tuition, work life balance and family commitment are barriers to the pursuit of advanced nursing education. The study therefore recommended that policy makers should make efforts to provide adequate job incentives for nurses and reduce the cost of tuition for advance nursing education to an affordable level.

Keywords: Motivators; barriers; advanced nursing education; job incentives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nursing profession over the years is seen as the heartbeat of clinical practice. The focus of nursing profession is on the care of Individuals, families and communities [1]. This is with a view of ensuring optimal health and quality life. Nursing entails independent and collaborative care of people of all ages, family, group and community who are unhealthy or healthy. Nursing encompasses care of the sick, advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, health research, health policy design, health system management and education.

Considering the enormous roles played by nurses all over the world, the importance of advanced education for nurses cannot be overemphasized.

Canadian Nurses Association [2] submitted that nurses with higher education render care that leads to improved patient outcomes. Some of the positive outcomes include; shorter hospital stay, effective nursing care, and decrease in patient's death. Hence, with health care growing steadily, nurses can move ahead through continued education which will enable them to provide the best possible care, advance their careers and keep up with requirements of Nursing Boards.

Blegen [3] found that hospitals with higher percentage of registered nurses with advanced degrees had lower congestive heart failure mortality, decubitus ulcer, and post-operative deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism and shorter length of stay. A study in six Nigerian hospitals revealed that only 1.10% of nurses are holders of university nursing degrees [4]. This figure is inadequate considering the enormous burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases in the country.

According to Adebayo, Labiru, Emerenini, Omoruyi [5] the estimated population of nurses in Nigeria is 248,553. It is interesting to note that a few percentage of these nurses have attained university degree. This is worrisome and calls

for serious attention. Even though one may argue that Nigeria is a developing country with its own pressing developmental issues, policy makers may not be well aware of the benefits of creating opportunities for advanced nursing education. Therefore, this study examines motivators and barriers to the pursuit of advanced nursing education in Nigeria.

A number of scholarly works related to nursing education and the barriers therein are available in literature. However, most of these studies were not conducted in Nigeria. For instance, Warren and Mills [6] conducted a study in determining the factors that motivate nurses to pursue advanced degree. They observed that nurses' willingness to return to school was intrinsically linked to incentives offered. Their findings also showed that if nurses were satisfied with their current career they were less likely to be motivated to return to an advance degree.

Laural and Nancyruth [7] posited that personal growth ,professional and career enhancement as well as programmatic and articulation friendliness are major factors that facilitate advanced nursing education whereas family and job constraints as well as lack of differential treatment constitute a sort of barrier to advance nursing education. Cathros [8] equally revealed that factors that affect nurses' decision to pursue graduate studies in nursing education could either be driving force (motivating factors) or restraining forces (barriers). The motivating factors according to him entails offering more program with a focus in nursing education, financial support and employers incentives, flexible program delivery option, family support, mentoring and collaboration initiatives. The restraining forces (barriers) which are lack of available program with a focus in nursing education, financial cost, tuition, time of work, lost salary, decreased salary when moving from clinical practice to academics, work responsibilities that may limit time and access to graduate studies, family responsibilities, lack of availability of mentor and lack of collaboration program. Megginson [9] noted that the barriers to

advanced nursing degree include; lack of time, equal treatment of diploma holders and BSN nurses as well as bad past experience in nursing school. Warren and Mills [6] also identified older age, family responsibilities and money as barriers to the pursuit of advanced education in nursing. This study seek to fill the gap in literature identified above especially in northern Nigeria.

In addition, the study is an attempt to understand the motivating factors as well as barriers to advanced nursing education in Nigeria. The increasing incidence of multi-morbidity and the challenges posed by a global pandemic like COVID-19 necessitate a demand for skilled crops of highly trained nurses with expertise to rise up to the challenges in the Nigerian health sector. Unfortunately, a large number of the nursing workforce cannot boast of an advanced degree in Nursing. This calls for urgent attention with a view of stemming the tide of medical tourism to other nations of the world and to improve the health care delivery system in Nigeria.

The objective of this study is to:

1. Identify the motivating factors for the pursuit of advanced nursing education in Nigeria.

2. Examine the barriers to the pursuit of advanced nursing education in Nigeria.

The research questions include the following:

1. What are the motivating factors for the pursuit of advanced nursing education in Nigeria?
2. What are the barriers to the pursuit of advanced nursing education in Nigeria?

The study framework was adapted from Gorczyca's [10] motivators and barriers by circles which explain motivators as increased income, job security, improved social status, better access to health care, for promotion, increased job opportunities, increase savings for retirement, enhance social skills, to be member of university community, develop others, develop potential and improve current job. The barriers include; work life balance, race limitation, gender, peer group, tuition fee, and misconception of graduate roles, supportive resources, financial impact, age, family commitment and alternative educational opportunity. The framework was chosen because of the similarities inherent in both studies.

1.1 Model of Study

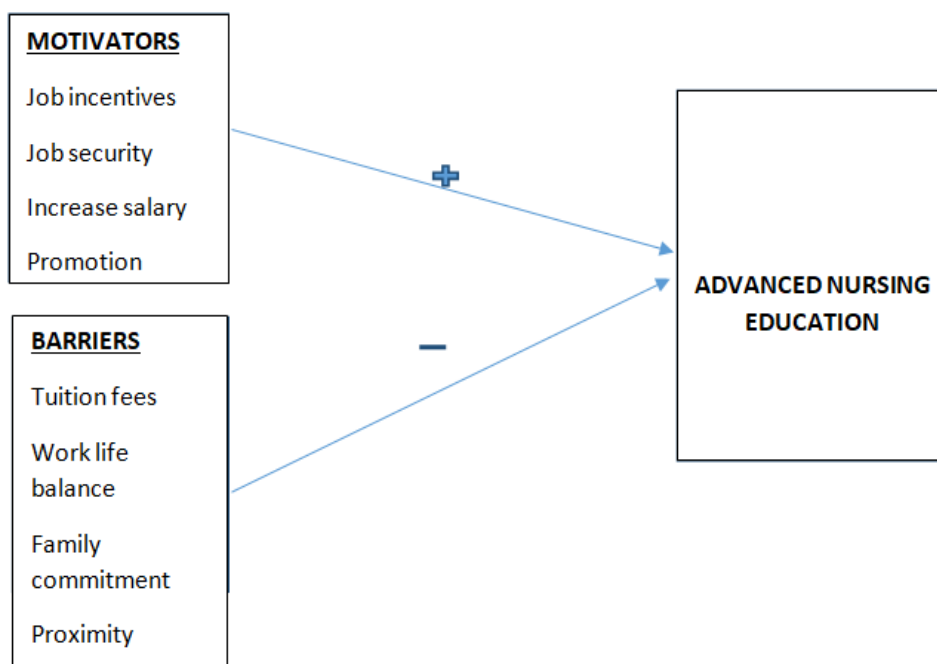


Fig. 1. Model for motivators and barriers to advanced nursing education

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The population of study included nurses with and without advanced nursing education at Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital in Nigeria. The nurses who were studying subjects were males and females selected from different departments and across different cadres in nursing profession. Nurses on leave and student nurses who worked at the teaching hospital were excluded from this study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select sample elements for this study. The teaching hospital consists of different departments and unit which is further divided into wards. These constituted the strata for random sampling. Nurses were selected randomly from different wards of the hospital using a table of random numbers. A total of 180 sample elements were selected from the population. The research

period was between April and June, 2021. Copies of questionnaire were administered and retrieved. One hundred percent retrieval rate was possible because the hospital is well structured. Respondents were asked to submit the questionnaire to a designated office. The reliability of the questionnaire was examined by carrying out a pre-test. Ambiguous questions were identified and corrected. The questionnaire underwent a reliability test. In addition, two different experts reviewed the questionnaire with a view of further ensuring reliability of the questionnaire. Data was collected using structured questionnaire and analysed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18. Frequencies and percentages were used to present the findings. The results generated from data analysis served as a basis on which conclusion was drawn.

2.1 Data Analysis-Findings

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

1.1	Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
	18 – 28	40	22.2
	29- 39	97	53.8
	40 – 50	30	16.7
	51 & above	13	7.2
	Total	180	100
1.2	Ethnic Affiliation of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
	Hausa/Fulani	102	56.7
	Igbo	18	10
	Yoruba	26	14.4
	Others	34	18.9
	Total	180	100
1.3	Work Experience of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
	0 – 2 years	52	28.9
	3 – 5 years	48	26.7
	6 – 8 years	51	28.3
	9 years & above	29	16.1
	Total	180	100
1.4	Religion of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
	Christianity	61	33.9
	Islam	119	66.1
	Others	-	-
	Total	180	100
1.5	Sex of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
	Male	48	26.7
	Female	132	73.3
	Total	180	100
1.6	Respondents Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
	Diploma	102	56.7
	BNS Degree	52	28.9
	Postgraduate	26	14.4
	Total	180	100

1.7 Marital Status of Respondents		Frequency	Percentage
Single		44	24.4
Married		114	63.3
Divorced		-	-
Widow/ Widower		22	12.2
Total		180	100

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2021

Table 2. Opinion of respondents

1. I am interested in advanced nursing education			2. I currently enrolled for advanced nursing education degree		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	146	81.1	Yes	42	23.3
No	23	12.8	No	120	66.7
Indifference	11	6.1	Indifference	18	10
Total	180	100	Total	180	100
3. There are job incentives for advanced nursing education degree holders			4. The cost of tuition for advanced nursing education is high		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	178	98.9	Yes	142	78.9
No	-	-	No	16	8.9
Indifference	2	1.1	Indifference	22	12.2
Total	180	100	Total	180	100
5. Motivators for the pursuit of advanced nursing education			6. Barriers to the pursuit of advanced nursing education		
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Job incentives	144	80	Tuition fees	126	70
Job security	135	75	Work life balance	94	52.2
Increase salary	176	97.8	Family commitment	61	33.9
Promotion	180	100	Proximity	93	51.7

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2021

2.2 Findings

Table 1 shows the age of respondents. More than half of the respondents belong to the 29 -39 years age group while others are distributed along other age categories. This clearly shows that majority of the nurses are in their active years. Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents are Hausa, this is not unexpected as the teaching hospital used for this study is situated in the northern part of the country where people of Hausa origin predominantly reside. However, individuals from other ethnic groups are equally working in the teaching hospital. The years of experience of the respondents is seen in Table 1. This elaborates that respondents were selected across different years of experience. Table 1 shows that respondents are basically practicing Christianity and Islamic religion but the number of adherents of Islamic religion are more than the number of Christians. This is not a surprise as the northern part of Nigeria is

dominated by Muslims. Table 1 shows that 73.3% of the respondents are females. This further confirms the fact that nursing profession in Nigeria is dominated by females. Table 1 also shows that more than half of the respondents did not have advanced nursing education as 56.7% of them have diploma degree. Others have BNS degree and post graduate degree. Majority of the respondents 63.3% are married. This may be due to the culture of early marriage in the northern part of Nigeria.

Table 2 shows that majority of the nurses 81.1% were interested in advanced nursing education. A few of them 12.8% are not interested in advanced nursing education while 6.1% are indifferent. Table 2 shows that 23.3% of the respondents are currently pursuing advanced nursing education while 66.7% are not pursuing any advanced education degree at the moment. 10% of the respondents were indifferent. Table 2 shows that 98.9% of the respondents believe that there are job incentives for advanced nursing

education degree holders. 1.1% of the respondents were indifferent. In table 2, 78.9% of the respondents noted that tuition fees for advanced nursing education is high, 8.9% of the respondent felt the tuition fees is not high, while 12.2% of the respondents were indifferent. In table 2, respondents in varying percentage figures identified job incentives (80%), job security (75%), increased salary (97.8%), and promotion (100%) as motivators for the pursuit of advanced nursing education. Moreover, in table 2 respondents identified tuition fees (70%), work life balance (52.2%), family commitment (33.9%), and proximity (51.7%) as barriers to the pursuit of advanced nursing education.

3. DISCUSSION

The study shows that promotion, increased salary and job incentives are three factors that motivate advanced education among nurses while barriers are tuition fees, work life balance and proximity to higher institution that enrolls into bachelor in Nursing programme. This however, is in contrast to the study conducted by Laural and Nancyruth [7] which stated that personal growth, professional and career enhancement as well as programmatic and articulation friendliness are major factors that facilitate advanced nursing education whereas family and job constraints as well as lack of differential treatment constitute a sort of barrier to advance nursing education. It is important to note that financial concerns cut across the two studies as a barrier to advance nursing education.

The differences in factors enhancing and hindering respondents in taking advanced education such as bachelor of science in nursing are somewhat similar but ranked differently in this study and in the study conducted by Laural and Nancyruth [7]. This is likely due to literacy level and exposure. For instance, Nigeria is among low-resource income countries while America is in high resource income country. The primary driving force of undertaking advanced nursing education in Nigeria is salary increase while personal growth is the main motivator among Americans [7]. This study equally corroborated the position of Cathros [8], Warren and Mills [6] and Megginson [9] that family responsibilities and financial constraints among others are barriers to the pursuit of advanced education in nursing while financial support, employers incentives and family support are motivators to the pursuit of higher nursing education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has been able to identify motivators and barriers to the pursuit of advanced nursing education in Nigeria. Job incentives, job security, increased salary, and promotion were identified as motivators for the pursuit of advanced nursing education. Cost of tuition, work life balance, family commitment, and proximity on the other hand were identified as barriers to the pursuit of advanced nursing education. The study further established a negative correlation between job incentives and enrolment for advanced nursing education as well as a negative correlation between cost of tuition and enrolment for advance nursing education.

5. RECOMMENDATION

This study recommends that federal government and all stakeholders should provide appropriate incentives to nurses who are interested in advanced nursing education. Also, efforts should be made to ensure job security and promotion for nurses. The promotion however, should be premised on thorough assessment of performance over a given period of time as well as feedbacks from patients and care-givers.

Lastly, cost of tuition for advanced nursing education should be reduced to an affordable level and the programme made more accessible by introducing Bachelor of Science in nursing education in all the states of federation.

6. LIMITATION OF STUDY

This study is limited to a teaching hospital in one state in Nigeria. It must be noted that the level of education in the northern and southern parts of Nigeria is different from each other. Socio-cultural factors have substantial effects on people and their careers across the length and breadth of Nigeria.

CONSENT

Informed consent was obtained voluntarily from all respondents that participated in this study. The identity of respondents in terms of their names and respective units in the Teaching Hospital were protected with utmost confidentiality.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The Researchers involved in this study obtained necessary approval from their employers and

from the concerned Head of Department who designated an office for the submission of questionnaire.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDY

There is need to replicate this study in other states in Nigeria especially in the southern part of Nigeria.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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