

1 Student Nurses Perception of Poor Academic Performance in 2 Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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7 **Abstract**

8 This research was conducted to examine the causes of poor academic performance by student
9 nurses in the Bayelsa State School of Nursing in Nigeria, using the descriptive survey. The
10 population consisted of 206 student nurses. As a result of their small size, they were all
11 adopted for the study. However, only a total of 201 of the student nurses who completed their
12 questionnaires participated in the study. A researcher-designed instrument named ?Student
13 Nurses? Academic Performance Questionnaire? (SNAPQ) was employed in generating data
14 for the study. The instrument was validated and a reliability index of 0.87 was obtained. The
15 instrument was analyzed using simple percentages and t-test statistics. Results showed that
16 the five perceived causes of poor academic performance among student nurses included: giving
17 the students too many assignments, parents? inability to provide all the text books needed,
18 student nurses lacking all their basic needs, lack of library and internet facilities and students?
19 inability to understand the science subjects. The ttest employed showed a statistically
20 significant difference in students nurses? perception of causes of poor academic performance
21 on the basis of class level. The recommendations included provision of counselling services for
22 the students and teachers, restructuring the nursing curriculum and reducing the number of
23 assignments given to the students by their teachers, students? formation of study groups,
24 provisions of library and internet facilities, amongst others.

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26 **Index terms**— student nurses, reorientation, poor academic performance, counselling, nigeria.

27 **1 Introduction**

28 The standard of education in Nigeria is frequently brought to focus by stake holders in the education industry.
29 This is obviously due to the emphasis placed on education by every nation as a means of economic, social and
30 political development. The public outcry of the dilapidating scenario, arouses researchers' curiosity to uncover
31 the root cause of the problem. For example, Imogie (2002) expresses great concern as regards the declining
32 quality of education of Nigerian graduates with little technical know-how. This was considered as a serious
33 setback in the industrial development of Nigeria. According to Mac-Farlane (2002), academic performance
34 is the ability of students to cope with their studies as well as how various tasks assigned to them by their
35 instructors are accomplished. It also includes the ability to study and remember facts and to be able to express
36 such knowledge gained either verbally or in writing (Mac-Farlane, 2002). While Aremu (2003) describes poor
37 academic performance as a performance that is adjudged by the examiner as falling below an expected standard,
38 Adesemowo (2005) decries the poor academic performance in specialized basic sciences such as Mathematics and
39 English especially in tertiary institutions.

40 Academic failure is not only frustrating to the students and parents but leaves a devastating effect on the society
41 in terms of shortage of manpower in all spheres of the economy and the nation's health challenges ??Aremu, 2000).
42 Education at the tertiary level is expected to be the peak and crown towards higher knowledge, an instrument

7 B) POPULATION OF THE STUDY

43 used to achieve a more rapid economic, social, political, technological, scientific and cultural development of
44 any country ??Aremu, 2000). Furthermore, a lot of emphasis have been placed on the academic performance
45 of students over the years by researchers, and that deterioration had occurred in all fields of education in the
46 society (Mendezabal, 2013). Previous research asserts that poor academic performance may be as a result of
47 intermittent non-payment of teachers' salaries, poor

48 2 T a) Statement of the Problem

49 The role of the nursing education is to prepare student nurses for professional competence in the field. Nursing
50 education is described as 'a planned educational programme which provides broad and sound foundation for
51 effective practice of nursing (Adeoye & Popoola, 2011). However, in a situation where this is lacking as a result
52 of poor academic performance, there are likely to be problems at subsequent levels outside the four walls of
53 the institution, especially when the students do not possess adequate knowledge needed to enhance professional
54 skills required in executing basic nursing procedures for health. This study has become necessary, meriting
55 scholarly attention in part because all the student nurses trained would eventually work in the hospitals where
56 precious lives of the patients are deposited in their care. Therefore, a poorly trained nurse becomes a threat
57 to the lives of the patients he/she might be responsible for, which could result to loss of lives and compound
58 the poor state of the health sector in Nigeria. remuneration of teachers, poor reading habits, problems caused
59 by parents, society, as well as poor funding (Ajila & Olutola, 2007). Others include low retention, association
60 with peers, a teacher's non-use of verbal reinforcement strategies and laziness of students (Aremu & Sakan,
61 2003;Aremu & Oluwole, 2001;Morakinyo, 2003;Rowe, Stewart & Patterson, 2007). These studies were carried
62 out in different locale, using secondary school subjects. A similar study carried out in Niger Delta University
63 investigated the relationship between anxiety and poor academic performance of student nurses. It found that
64 physiological anxiety was one of the factors responsible for their poor performance while there was no significant
65 difference between male and female students regarding the causes of their poor academic performance (Afolayan,
66 Donald, Onasoga, Adeyanju & Agama, 2013). This study used such variables as gender with special attention
67 to physiological and psychological anxiety syndrome. Anxiety However, the focus of the present study is on such
68 variables as class level of the student nurses in determining their perception of poor academic performance.

69 Available information from the Bayelsa State School of Nursing Admissions and Records ??2011) indicates
70 that as the admission rate increases, the passing rate decreases. Therefore, this study sought to find out the
71 main causes of the poor performance reported by the authorities.

72 3 b) Purpose of the Study

73 The study was carried out to: 1. examine the causes of poor academic performance as perceived by student
74 nurses in Bayelsa State School of Nursing, Nigeria 2. determine the differences in the causes of poor academic
75 performance of student nurses on the basis of their class levels.

76 4 c) Research Questions

77 The research questions posed by the study were as follows:

78 1. What are the main causes of poor academic performance as perceived by student nurses in Bayelsa State
79 School of Nursing? 2. What are the perceived causes of poor academic performance between Year 1 and Year 3
80 student nurses?

81 5 d) Research Hypothesis

82 The following hypothesis guided the study: 1. There is no statistically significant difference between Year 1 and
83 Year 3 students' perception of the causes of the poor academic performance of student nurses in Bayelsa State
84 School of Nursing.

85 II.

86 6 Methodology a) Research Design

87 The study adopted the descriptive survey method. The method is appropriate because Nwankwo (2006) posits
88 that the general purpose of survey research is to reveal current condition or provide a factual descriptive picture
89 of the situations as they exist in their natural setting and also reveal the need for change. Furthermore, it allows
90 the researcher to do an in-depth study on the sample with a view to unearthing the major characteristics among
91 a set or unit. Thus, survey design was considered as the most appropriate method in finding out the perceived
92 causes of poor academic performance among student nurses in Bayelsa State School of Nursing, Nigeria.

93 7 b) Population of the Study

94 The population of the study consisted of 206 student nurses (Bayelsa State School of Nursing Admissions and
95 Records, 2011). This comprises 84 males and 122 females from Year 1-3. As a result of the small number of
96 student nurses in the school, the sample was purposively selected, made up of all the 206 student nurses from
97 Year 1-3. This consisted of 97 (Year One); 61 (Year Two) and 48 (Year Three) student nurses respectively. Of

98 the 206 student nurses, 84(40.8%) were males and 122(59.2%) were females. The age of the students ranges from
99 22-37years. However, only 201 correctly filled questionnaires were considered suitable for the analysis. This is
100 because 5 of the students did not respond to some of the statements.

101 **8 d) Instrumentation**

102 A researcher-designed instrument named Student Nurses Academic Performance Questionnaire (SNAPQ) was
103 employed in generating data for the study. The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A sought the
104 demographic details of the respondents such as age, sex, class level, etc; and Section B was made up of 14
105 statements on the perceived causes of poor academic performance of the students. The items of the questionnaire
106 were derived from review of related literature on the causes of poor academic performance of students. The
107 response pattern used was 'Yes' and 'No'.

108 **9 e) Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

109 The instrument was assessed by two experts in Sociology and Counselling and they ascertained the content
110 validity of the instrument which indicated that the instrument measured what it was intended to measure. Thus,
111 the contributions made by the assessors were integrated in the final draft of the questionnaire. The test re-test
112 reliability index obtained was 0.87 using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r).

113 **10 f) Data Administration and Collection Procedure**

114 The Researchers sought the permission of the school authority indicating the purpose of the study.

115 Upon receiving a letter of consent from them, the aim of the study was explained to the students who
116 unanimously agreed to participate voluntarily. The instrument was thereafter administered on the respondents
117 by the researchers and collected back as soon as the respondents finished. This was made possible with the help
118 of one research assistant per class/level. At the end, 201 copies which were correctly filled were used for the
119 analysis.

120 **11 g) Data Analysis Technique**

121 In analyzing the data from the respondents, frequency counts and simple percentages were employed. Fur-
122 thermore, ranking order was used to determine the most and least important factors responsible for the poor
123 academic performance of student nurses; and a t-test for differences in the students' responses on the basis of
124 their class levels. Table 2 shows that the top five perceived causes of poor academic performance among student
125 nurses included: giving the students too many assignments (53.2%), parents' inability to provide all the text
126 books needed by the student nurses (9.0%), student nurses lack all their basic needs (8.0%), lack of library
127 and internet facilities (7.0%) and students' inability to understand the science subjects (4.5%). ? Significant;
128 P<0.05 Table 3 indicates that the calculated t-test of 5.42 is greater than the critical t of 1.96 at the 0.05 level
129 of significance. Based on the result, the hypothesis was rejected, meaning that there is a statistically significant
130 difference between year one and year three respondents' perception of the causes of poor academic performance
131 of student nurses.

132 **12 III.**

133 **13 Results**

134 IV.

135 **14 Discussion**

136 This study revealed that five main causes of poor academic performance of student nurses as perceived by the
137 respondents were giving the students too many assignments, parents' inability to provide all the text books
138 needed for studying, students lacking basic needs, lack of library and internet facilities and students' inability
139 to understand the science subjects.. Others include the belief that nursing is meant for the females only, age of
140 entry of the students into the programme, poor hostel environment, etc.

141 As regards giving students too many assignments, the researchers are of the view that when students are busy
142 with too many assignments, it will not give them sufficient time to read their books, which invariably results into
143 poor academic performance. The finding as it relates to the poor living conditions indicated by the respondents
144 agrees with previous study by Isangedighi (2008) who reports that the unattractive environment of learners was
145 capable of de-motivating them in achieving good academic results. This was considered as 'learners' environment
146 mismatch' (Isangedighi, 2008). . Similarly, Bakare (1994) observes earlier that school location and the physical
147 building militates against good academic achievement.

148 In view of the finding that poor academic performance of student nurses was related to the inability of parents
149 to provide all their basic needs, it corroborates a previous report which posits that lack of basic nutrition could
150 affect the academic standard of students (Bakare, 1994). In the same vein, factors militating against good
151 academic performance could be resident in the family as cognitive stimulation by care givers and the ability

152 of parents to encourage the development of basic cognitive skills in children during the first 2 years of life
153 (Bakare, 2004). Similarly, the finding is consistent with the submissions of Morakinyo (2003) which reports that
154 a relationship exists between the socio-economic status of parents and the academic achievements of individuals.
155 In other words, the level of parents' socio-economic status determines the availability of instructional as well as
156 all other necessary materials for learning. The students' view of nursing as a profession for females alone could
157 be one major factor of student nurses' abysmal academic performance.

158 Furthermore, in trying to weigh the responses of year one and year three student nurses as regards the causes
159 of their poor academic performance, it revealed that they were significantly different. This could be because the
160 year one students are saddled with more assignments than the year three who are involved in more practical
161 work. Experience has shown that the curriculum content of first year students have more of theoretical than
162 practical work.

163 V.

164 15 Conclusion

165 The major obstacles hindering good academic performance of the student nurses were found to include the
166 way teachers in the profession assign too many home works to the student nurses, poor facilities, provision of
167 inadequate basic needs by parents, students' perception, especially the idea that nursing is meant for the females,
168 amongst others. The perception of the respondents that nursing is meant for the females is very important in
169 drawing the conclusion that they might have opted for the nursing profession as a last resort. It therefore stands
170 to reason that the way humans perceive a thing would influence their likeness and performance at the task.
171 The role of parents in providing the needed encouragement for the students was also associated with increased
172 academic performance of the student nurses.

173 16 VI.

174 17 Counselling and Educational Implications

175 The outcome of this study will enable school counsellors to organize a symposium for parents, school
176 administrators, nursing teachers and students themselves. Counselling services should be extended to this group
177 of people because counselling enables people to overcome anxieties and worries. Parents for instance would be
178 enlightened by knowing that adequate provisions of students' basic needs are vital to their academic performance.

179 The study will expose school administrators on the need to provide a conducive environment for the student
180 nurses, and the teachers would also realize that giving too many assignments is detrimental to students' academic
181 performance. This is because the students may not have the time to read. Finally, the students themselves should
182 be orientated into forming study groups and given some tips on effective study habit techniques. This will enable
183 them to realize their individual roles in enhancing good academic performance. Therefore, counsellors should
184 utilize group and individual counselling techniques in bringing this about. More importantly, the students need
185 academic counselling in helping them develop rational ideas about the nursing profession rather than relating
186 performance to gender differences.

187 18 VII.

188 19 Recommendations

189 In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered: i. The nursing academic
190 curriculum should be restructured and made flexible to provide adequate space for practical learning and
191 interaction by the students. In this regard, the lecture hours should be reduced to give the students opportunity for
192 personal study. ii. Student nurses themselves must have adequate time to form their own personal study time table
193 and engage in group studies in order to improve their academic performance. iii. The school administrators should
194 ensure that adequate or conducive environment with library and internet facilities are available to encourage the
195 students to learn. ¹



Figure 1: Student

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S/N	Class/Level	Male	(N=206)	Female	Total
1.	Post	PT\$7(38.1)	60(61.9)	97	
2.	(Year 1)	30(49.2)	31(50.8)	61	
3	Year 2	17(35.4)	31(64.6)	48	
	Year 3				
	Total =	84	122	206	

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentage values.

c) Sample and Sampling Technique

Figure 2: Table 1 :

19 RECOMMENDATIONS

2

Statement	F	%	Rank Order
Student nurses perform poorly in academics because:			
	107	53.2	1 st
	18	9.0	2nd
	16	8.0	3rd
	14	7.0	4th
	9	4.5	5th
	8	4.0	6th
7. Most students start the programme when advanced in age.	7	3.5	7th
8. Student nurses live in poor hostel environment.	6	3.0	8th
9. Student nurses are not given tutorials	5	2.4	9th
10. The teachers do not explain the lessons well.	3	1.5	9th
11. Student nurses whose parents are less educated perform poorly	3	1.5	11th
12. Parents do not provide extra lessons for students.	2	1.0	12th
13. The school lacks well trained teachers.	2	1.0	12th
14. Student nurses are not supervised by their parents.	1	0.4	14th
Total=	201	100	

[Note: 1. Students are saddled with too many assignments. 2. Parents do not provide all the text books needed. 3. Student nurses lack most of their basic needs. 4. There are no library or internet facilities. 5. Student nurses do not understand the sciences. 6. The male nurses believe that nursing is for females only.]

Figure 3: Table 2 :

3

Class Level N	X	SD	Df	Calculated t	Critical t	Decision
Year One	97	30.0	15.1			
Year Three	48	19.0	9.2	153 5.42*	1.96	Rejected

Figure 4: Table 3 :

196 iv. The provision of guidance and counselling services by the government will also improve the all round
197 performance of the students, not only academically, but socially, psychologically and morally.

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