

## ASSESSING FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNING AMONG STUDENTS OF COLLEGE OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY DAMATURU

By

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### **Abstract**

*The study was carried out at Shehu Sule College of Nursing and Midwifery, Damaturu, Yobe State with the aim of Assessing the Academic Factors Affecting Learning among the Students of the College. The design adopted for this study was 'non experimental descriptive design' which enables the researchers to gather data from the students and staff of the college. The technique for drawing the samples from the target population was 'stratified random sampling'. Evidence from this study shows that there are many factors affecting learning at the institution, some of them include; spending less time on studies, language barrier, lack of motivation, anxiety and threat, not usage of the library. We can also infer from this study that the learning environment is conducive for learning the lecturers often provide academic support classes and the students often attend the classes. However, the most effective means of promoting learning is through collaborative learning, integrating computer technology, group discussion.*

### **Introduction**

Nursing education prepares the students from different cultures and beliefs to be delivering professional nursing care to people of all ages, in all phases of health and illness confidently (Artelt, 2013). Nursing students need to be equipped with relevant skills and knowledge in all aspects of health which include medical, behavioral, and biological as well as physical sciences because the rapid change in health care system requires nurses to possess wide knowledge, clinical competency, greater independence and autonomy in clinical judgments (Meyer, D.K. & Turner, J.C. (2012). In the pre-colonial era, the standard of nursing education was lower than the apprenticeship type of training. People recruited had no formal education other than being loyal to their masters. The training was carried out at various mission posts, which later became the training schools (Leufer, T. (2010). Following the Crimean war, Florence Nightingale initiated and sustained a campaign for nurses all over the world to have an organized and formal training; this had a positive influence in Nigeria (Koh, L.C. 2008).

In Nigeria many factors have been highlighted to affect the ability of students to cultivate effective and efficient study habits such include state of health, motivation, anxiety and state of mind, conducive and suitable environment for learning, and availability of textbook and well-equipped

libraries (Hopkins, H.T. (2008). Furthermore, a survey was conducted in some selected nursing schools in Nigeria to identify causes of low academic performance of students, some of which include inadequate facilities, lack of lecturers, socio-cultural factors and unfavorable government policies (Herington, C. & Weaven, S. 2008).

This study is motivated as there is decreased number of students at graduation, hence creating an imbalance between the input and output of students. Therefore, the study seeks to investigate the factors affecting students learning at Shehu Sule College of Nursing and Midwifery and also to find lectures input affecting learning at Shehu Sule College of Nursing and Midwifery.

### Method

Non-experimental, descriptive research design was used for the study. 80 students were sampled and selected using stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaire was used in obtaining information for the study. The questionnaire consists of 25 sets of questions which are divided into two. Section 'A' Demographic data, section 'B' factors affecting learning, which is in relation to the research objectives.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was organised and analyzed using simple frequency distribution tables and percentage and was presented in linear graphs and tables and some data was analyzed using mean statistics.

Formula for mean  $X = \frac{\sum Fx}{N}$ , where  $\Sigma$  = summation, F = frequency, x = weight of scale, N = number of subjects. The value of the rating scale is as follows; Strongly agreed (SA) = 4, agreed (A) = 3, disagreed (D) = 2, strongly disagreed (SD) = 1.

Decision rule:

$$4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10$$

$$\text{Midpoint} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$$

This shows that any response above 2.5 is accepted as agreed and any mean responses less than 2.5 is rejected.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

#### Section A: Demographic Data

TABLE 4.1

S/N	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	<b>SEX</b>		
	Female	59	78.7
	Male	16	21.3
	Total	75	100
2	<b>CATEGORY</b>		
	Student	63	84
	Staff	12	16
	Others	0	0
	Total	75	100

3	<b>POSITION</b>		
	Midwife educator	5	41.7
	Nurse educator	4	33.3
	Lecturer	3	25
	Total	12	100
4	<b>YEAR OF STUDY</b>		
	First year	39	61.9
	Second year	17	27
	Third year	7	11.1
	Total	63	100
5	<b>LANGUAGE SPOKEN BY THE STUDENTS</b>		
	Hausa	45	71.4
	English	2	3.2
	Others	16	25.4
	Total	63	100

The above table shows the demographic data of the respondents, whereby majority of the respondents were females 78.7% (59) and 21.3 % (16) are males. Also, the result indicates that 84 % (63) of the respondents are students and only 16% (12) are staffs. The result also shows that 41.7% (5) of the respondents are midwife educators, 33.3 % (4) are nurse educators and 25% (3) are lecturers. According to the table also, 61.9% (39) of the respondents are in the first year of their study making the majority, 27% (17) are in their second year and 11.1% (7) are in their final year representing the minority of the respondents. The last item on the table shows that, the dominant home language of the respondents is Hausa 71.4% (45) followed by other languages such as Kanuri, Kare-Kare and Fulani, only 3.2% (2) of the respondents speaks English as their home language.

### Section “B” Factors Affecting Learning Related to Students

**Table 4.2 Nursing/Midwifery as Career Choices**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
First choice	35	55.6
Second choice	15	23.8
Third choice	13	20.6
Total	63	100

The above table shows that majority of the respondents 55.6% (35) indicated that nursing/midwifery was their first choice while 23.8% (15) and 20.6% (13) indicated that it is their second and third choice respectively.

**Table 4.3: Choosing Nursing/Midwifery as Career Choice**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
I wanted to be a professional nurse/midwife	31	46.1
Nursing/midwifery is a secure job	22	38.1
It is easy to make money through nursing/midwifery education	5	7.9
Others	5	7.9
Total	63	100

The above table shows the selection of nursing/midwifery as career choice of respondents, whereby 46.1% (31) indicated they chose nursing/midwifery because they wanted to be professional nurses/midwives, 38.1% (22) choose nursing/midwifery because they considered nursing/midwifery to be a secure job, 7.9% (5) of the respondents choose nursing/midwifery because it is easy to make money and 7.9% (5) of the respondents choose nursing/midwifery because of other reasons such as, to save life. This shows that most of the students joined the school because they want to be trained and become professionals in the field. This is opposed to those who wanted to secure jobs and or just because they want to make money easily. Therefore, this will not have an effect on their learning related issues.

**Table 4.4: Time Spend on Studies Per Day**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
One hour	5	8
Two hours	17	27
Three hours	31	49.2
Others	10	15.8
Total	63	100

The above shows that 8% (5) of the respondents spend only one hour on their studies daily, 27% (17) of the respondents spend two hours, 49.2% (31) spend three hours and 15.8% (10) of the respondents spend more than three hours. Being that most of the students spent much time studying, this means that they are ready to become trained nurses.

**Table 4.5: Learning/Study Approach**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Surface approach	28	44.4
Strategic approach	27	43.8
Deep approach	8	12.6
Others	0	0
Total	63	100

The above table indicates that 44.4% (28) of the respondents adopt surface approach while 43.8% (27) adopt strategic approach and 12.6% (8) adopt deep approach of learning/studies. This shows that most of the students need to be motivated and encouraged in order to improve their learning approach.

**Table 4.6 Mean Responses**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	X	REMARK
10	I receive motivation during my learning/studies.	9	10	26	18	2.1	Rejected
11	English language is a barrier to learning.	35	27	10	3	3.2	Accepted
12	Language problems affect learning/studies.	19	33	14	9	2.8	Accepted
13	Anxiety and threat affect learning outcomes.	25	36	9	5	3.0	Accepted

The table above indicates that, the respondents rejected item 10 that they do not receive any motivation during learning/study, this will therefore be a problem to the students because they are willing to be trained and learn, but lack of motivation will make them lose interest in their studies.

For the accepted items 11, 12 and 13 as factors affecting students learning at this institution under study. This can have a great impact in affecting the performance of the students. Therefore, the school should come up with quick and possible solutions to the problems as they can affect not only the students, but the entire community.

### SECTION “C” FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNING RELATED LECTURERS

**Table 4.7 Method of Assessment Done by Lecturers**

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Assessment test	25	33.3
Quiz	12	16
Verbal questions	17	22.7
All of the above	21	28
Total	75	100

The table above shows that, 33.3% (25) of the respondents indicated lecturers administer test as a method of assessment while 16% (12) indicated that lectures adopt the quiz method 22.7% (17) indicated verbal questions are being ask to assess students and 28% (21) of the respondents indicated that all the method were being employed to assess students.

**Table 4.8 Teaching Strategies Employed in The School**

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Student centered learning	37	49.3
Pedagogical learning method	5	6.7
Traditional method of learning	15	20
All of the above	18	24
Total	75	100

The above table shows that the most common teaching strategy employed in the school is student centered learning with 49.3% (37), while 6.7% (5) of the respondents indicated pedagogical method, 20% (15) indicated traditional method is adopted and 24% (18) says all the above method are employed in the school.

**TABLE 4.9 MEAN RESPONSES**

S/N	ITEMS	E	A	D	SD	X	REMARK
16	I often provide academic support classes	2	8	2	0	3.00	Accepted
17	I often attend academic support classes when provided	14	28	17	4	2.80	Accepted

**Grand mean = 2.90**

The above indicates a grand mean of 2.90, which suggest general acceptance of all items in the table. Individual analysis of the responses indicates that the respondents agreed with all items presented in the table as they have response means of above 2.5. This shows that the lecturers often provide academic support classes and the students often attend the classes when provided.

## Discussion

The finding shows that majority of the respondents are females. This is because nursing is predominantly a female profession. This result aligns with a study conducted by DeBourgh, (2009). According to this study, men were deterred from entering nursing, because of the following reasons: public perceptions, images of nursing, the value of nursing to the society, sex stereotypes and patient preferences.

The result also showed that, the largest groups of the respondents were in their first years followed by second year and third year. A study conducted by Diseth (2012), showed that first year students indicated that they need more guidance and support. In the same study, the final year students reported that though the volume of academic work was heavy were they have become accustomed to taking responsibility for their own learning, and felt that they had acquired the necessary skills for the challenge.

The dominant home language of the respondents is Hausa 71.4% (45) followed by other languages such as Kanuri, Kare-Kare and Fulani, only 3.2% (2) of the respondents speak English at home. For the factors affecting learning related to students, the result shows that majority of the respondents indicated that nursing/midwifery was their first choice while others and minority indicated that it is their second and third choice respectively and it also shows that respondents choose nursing/midwifery because they wanted to be professional nurses/midwives, some because it is a secure job, others because of other reasons such as to save humanity, while only few the respondents choose nursing because it is easy to make money through nursing/midwifery. The majority of the respondents indicated they spend three hours on their studies per day and some more than three hours only 8% of the respondents spends only one hour. Similar, to this study, result from the study conducted by Biggs, J.B (2010), showed that the third year students spent the most time on their studies per day (3.5 hours), first and second year students spent 2.3 hours and fourth year 3 hours on their studies daily.

The respondents showed that they do not receive any motivation, English is a barrier to learning, language problems affect learning/studies and lastly anxiety and threat affect their learning outcomes. A study conducted by Artelt (2013) in different countries showed that motivation determined the choice to become engaged in a task. The result is in accordance with the study conducted by Salamonson and Andrew (2010), which showed that students from non-English speaking backgrounds had lower academic performance than those from English speaking backgrounds.

For the factors affecting learning related to lecturers, the evidence from the study showed that, there is no any factor related to lecturers affecting students' learning. The teachers often provide academic support classes and students always attend when provided. A study conducted by Ofori and Chariton (2009) concluded that support seeking has the highest direct effect on academic performance.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings from the study, the following should be considered as recommendations:

- To maintain a minimal attrition rate, the selection of students into nursing program should not be rushed, as this will result in unsuitable candidates being selected.
- To maintain quality assurance in higher education, various strategies should be introduced. An educational audit should be carried out after every block, or whenever the need arises.
- The academic performance of the students should be taken into consideration, with particular attention to the workloads of students, language problems, motivation and relieving anxiety and threat.
- English, as Second Language students should be encouraged to adopt a strategic approach to their studies. This should help them to experience the satisfaction of short term wins, which should consequently result in a better self-esteem and in their studies becoming more appealing, due to higher self-motivational levels.
- Students should be motivated to increase the number of hours they spend on their studies per day.

### **Conclusion**

The results from this study supported the research question being investigated that is to assess the academic factors affecting learning at college of nursing and midwifery Damaturu.

This study shows that a variety of factors had indeed contributed to high attrition rate at this college. Analysis of the data showed that students did not spend sufficient time on their studies per day. Language had been a barrier to their learning. Students need motivation for their learning and study.

The study also shows that there are some factors that have contributed in affecting the ability of students to cultivate effective and efficient study habits, they include state of health, motivation, anxiety and state of mind, conducive and suitable environment for learning, and availability of textbook and well-equipped libraries, this is in line with Hopkins, H.T. (2008) findings.

Furthermore, this study identified the causes of low academic performance of students, some of which include inadequate facilities, lack of lecturers, socio-cultural factors and unfavorable government policies.

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