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Career Preferences of Bachelor of Science in Nursing Graduates Of President Ramon Magsaysay State University Batch 2022-2023

Egalla, Rizza B., Maranoc, Precious Mae M., Nonan, Maria Wena Grace.,
Operaña, Lexus Jan B., Pudadera, Joseph Reignier E., Ramos, Althea D.,
Sadera, Florence Danzel B., Sevilla, Shellalae A., Shibles, Cyndie.,
Soliven, Ella Mae C., Tapiceria, Cherryleigh N.

President Ramon Magsaysay State UniversityCollege of Nursing Iba, Zambales, Philippines

ABSTRACT : Pursuing a specialization is not only beneficial for career advancement but also for shaping the future of the healthcare industry. The purpose of this study is to determine the career preferences of Bachelor of Science in Nursing Graduates of President Ramon Magsaysay State University. The 30-item questionnaire was crafted based on a well referenced research paper, with inspiration drawn from related studies. To achieve this, a quantitative research design with a descriptive method was used, and a sample technique by targeting the entire population of 135 respondents. Findings revealed that the majority of the respondents are female, 20-24 years of age, and all express a preference for nursing as their first chosen career. In terms of statistical analyses, no significant differences were found in career preferences based on demographic variables such as age, sex, and GWA. Additionally, there was no significant difference between ten-year career expectations and career preferences, as the preferred careers predominantly remained within the nursing field. Correlation analysis reveals that certain factors influencing field preferences have a statistically significant negative correlation with ten-year career expectations, indicating that these factors may influence respondents' expectations for their future careers. However, for other factors, no statistically significant relationship was observed. Based on the result, the researchers recommend the following, (1) Continuous evaluation of BS Nursing Curriculum to ensure global competitiveness, (2) Creation and promotion of specialized training for hospital settings, (3) Integrate career development programs, (4) Foster gender-inclusive initiatives, and (5) Strengthening soft skills and positive workplace relationships.

KEYWORDS: Career Choice, Nursing Student, Career Preference

I.   INTRODUCTION

The majority of healthcare workers are registered nurses, essential in providing care across various demographics. The World Health Organization (WHO) forecasts a global shortage of over 7.6 million nurses by 2030, significantly impacting healthcare delivery. A notable concern is the high turnover rate among newly graduated registered nurses (NGRNs) early in their careers.

Nursing students globally show preferences for certain clinical settings, often favoring pediatrics, maternity, operating rooms, and intensive care units. Australian studies indicate that while nursing students' preferences evolve, pediatric and intensive care settings remain top choices, with mental health and elderly care being least favored throughout their education (Matarese, Piredda, Merchetti, & Marinis, 2019).

Research from other countries aligns, showing consistent interest in pediatric and intensive care settings among nursing students, with surgery and community care becoming appealing post-graduation. Geriatrics and psychiatry remain the least popular specialties (Matarese, Piredda, Merchetti, & Marinis, 2019).

The WHO highlights the critical role of community nurses in promoting health, preventing illness, and managing care across various settings. In Israel, for example, the majority of nurses work in hospitals, with a significant portion also employed in community health centers and academic roles (Sela, Grinberg, Shapiro, &Nissanholtz-Gannot, 2020).

Specialization within nursing offers career advancement and the opportunity to influence practice, education, and healthcare outcomes. Pursuing a specialization often requires advanced education but provides far-reaching benefits (SHU, 2020).

Given the anticipated nursing shortages, the career preferences of nursing students are crucial for future healthcare delivery. Collaborative efforts between nursing educators and health service providers are essential to guide and understand students' preferences in various healthcare settings. This study aims to explore the career plans of BSN graduates and the factors influencing their postgraduation career choices.

This study aims to answer the following questions:
1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, general weighted average, and career preference?
2. What are the career preferences of BSN graduates in terms of employment data, and future plans for working areas and specialization?
3. What do the BSN graduates expect for their careers 10 years after graduation?
4. What is the level of the field preferences of BSN graduates?
5. Is there a significant difference between the career preferences of BSN graduates when grouped according to profile variables?
6. Is there a significant difference between the ten-year career expectations of graduates and their career preferences?
7. Is there a significant relationship between the factors that influence their field of preferences to their ten-year career expectations?
8. Based on the results of the study, what is the intervention plan that may be proposed

This research explored the career preferences of the respondents through questionnaires. The findings benefit several groups: nursing graduates gain insights into peer career trends for better decision-making; nursing students find inspiration and factual data about employment statuses; parents receive guidance to better support their children's career choices; nursing administrators obtain valuable feedback to enhance curriculum and educational processes; society gains awareness of graduates' career plans, helping to address potential issues and improve academic programs; and future researchers receive a foundational basis for similar studies.

Career Preferences of BSN Graduates
With the limited number of nurses available, selecting the right area within the nursing field is becoming increasingly crucial. A significant number of nurses, particularly recent graduates, are leaving their jobs (Aydın, Oflaz, Karadağ, &Ocakçi, 2021). Globally, nursing students show preferences for certain clinical settings while ignoring others. Australian studies indicate that nursing students initially prefer working with children, in maternity wards, operating rooms, and intensive care units; by the end of their training, their top choices remain working with children or in intensive care, along with surgical wards. The least preferred areas of study throughout the course are elderly and psychiatric care (Matarese, Piredda, Merchetti, & Marinis, 2019). Similarly, Chinese nursing students favor pediatrics, maternity wards, and operating rooms initially; by the course's end, surgical and medical wards, as well as community care, become more popular, while psychiatry and elderly care remain the least desired throughout the four-year program (Shen and Xiao, 2012).

Career Expectation 10 Years After Graduation Nursing students typically contemplate their future career paths immediately after graduating, aiming to establish clear career plans with adaptable goals due to changing circumstances (Gunawan, Aungsuroch, Sukarna, & Wahab, 2018). Turkish research revealed that most graduates aspire to academic or administrative roles, while Palese et al.'s 2017 study indicated 64.2% of students preferred nursing jobs in their home countries, with smaller percentages seeking work abroad or further education. Graduates often favor public sector nursing due to stable income and benefits, and their desire to help others and advance their careers (Gunawan et al., 2018). Additionally, many students choose hospital work, particularly in medical-surgical nursing, though interest in hospital-based mental health nursing is low (Hsu & Ling, 2019; van Iersel et al., 2016).

Level of Field Preferences of Graduates in Nursing
Hsu, Ye, and Ling's (2022) study identified younger age, female gender, and nursing as a first study preference as factors favoring obstetric, gynecological, and pediatric nursing careers. This trend is attributed to gender differences (Wei et al., 2021) and nursing students' prior experiences with children and women's care (Hunt et al., 2020), as well as societal influences on the prestige of these fields.

Leadership roles in nursing require specific traits: nurse managers need strong communication skills and confidentiality (Sacred Heart University, 2020); educators must have compassion, empathy, and a love for research and teaching; clinical nurse leaders must be knowledgeable and team-oriented.

Mooney (2018) highlighted job security and diverse opportunities as key reasons for choosing nursing, while Midilli and Durgun (2017) emphasized the importance of a positive attitude towards the profession for career success. Hussein et al. (2017) noted that early career experiences in poor work environments negatively impact new graduate nurses' job satisfaction and long-term career intentions.

Italian nursing students preferred intensive care, pediatrics, and operating rooms over psychiatry and geriatrics, suggesting the need for curricula that value all practice areas (Matarese et al., 2019). In the Philippines, despite a high number of trained nurses working overseas, many registered nurses are unemployed or working outside healthcare (Badilla, 2016; NZME, 2017).

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) as an Alternative Job

The business process outsourcing (BPO) sector, growing since the mid-1990s, hires many nursing graduates due to the availability of a workforce with clinical nursing backgrounds, enabling international healthcare to outsource to the Philippines (Magellan Solutions, 2018). The high salaries in the BPO industry attract nurses more than hospital jobs, along with the perception that BPO work is less physically and mentally demanding (Carlos, 2018). Career decisions for recent graduates or non-practicing nurses are influenced by factors like education, preferred location, and salary, leading many to take on multiple jobs before settling down. Dissatisfied employees often remain open to new job offers (Sanchez & Diamante, 2017).

Career preferences impact job satisfaction; graduates aware of their career goals choose jobs aligning with their values, seeking a good environment and teamwork. Nurses have diverse career paths, including managerial roles, education, and research (Devi, 2017). Generation Z will dominate the future nursing workforce, and their clinical experience impacts their career retention. Poor experiences lead to higher dropout rates and lower professional engagement. Therefore, universities and health facilities must collaborate to provide quality clinical experiences to maintain a skilled nursing workforce (Kim, Chase, & Yoo, 2021).

II.METHODS

2.1Design

This study utilized a Quantitative Research, specifically, Descriptive Research to determine and explore the career plans of graduated BSN students of PRMSU. A survey is a nonexperimental, descriptive research method and is best suited to collect viewpoints of respondents (Riddell, 2018).

2.2Locale

The study was conducted at College of Nursing department of President Ramon Magsaysay State University (PRMSU) formerly known as Ramon Magsaysay Technological University (RMTU).

2.3Profile of Respondents

The primary source of data came from the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Alumni of Batch 2022-2023 at the College of Nursing of President Ramon Magsaysay State University (PRMSU) who graduated last August of the same year. There would be a total of 135 respondents for this study, who provided the socio-demographic profile as to age, sex, general weighted average, and career preference.

2.4Research Instrument

The researchers utilized a structured questionnaire. The researchers adapted it from various pertinent studies. The 30-item questionnaire was crafted based on a well referenced research paper, with inspiration drawn from related studies such as Career Preferences Among Nursing Students: A Cross-Sessional Study and Nursing Students' Career Plans After Graduation: Perspective from Generation Y.

III.RESULTS AND DISCUSION

3.1 Profile of the Respondents

The majority of participants fall within the 20-24 age range, constituting an overwhelming 97.04% of the total sample, 86.67% are females, while 13.33% make up the males. The General Weighted Average (GWA) illustrates the academic performance, with a notable concentration in the
1.50-1.90 GWA range, accounting for 59.26% of the respondents. Notably, in terms of career preferences, all respondents express a preference for nursing as their chosen career, yielding 100% agreement.

3.2 Career Preferences of BSN Graduates

Currently, 30.37% of the participants were employed, with 60.98% holding a contractual type of work, while 62.77% of the respondents are still reviewing for the Nursing Licensure Examination. The majority of participants, accounting for 89.63%, express a preference for working in a hospital setting.

Family Nurse and School Nurse share the top rank, both with a weighted mean of 1.5, indicating that respondents, on average, equally favor these roles within the community nursing setting. On the other hand,

Operating Room emerges as the top preference, earning the first rank with a notably low weighted mean of 1.07, suggesting strong favorability.

3.3 *Career Expectation of BSN Graduates 10 Years After Graduation*

Students expect their careers to be more fruitful after 10 years of graduation and majority of respondents, constituting 82.22%, express a preference for working as a Nurse Abroad, indicating a strong inclination towards international nursing opportunities.

3.4 *Factors Influencing the Field of Preference of BSN Graduates*

Nursing students participating in the study exhibited strong agreement regarding various factors influencing their career preferences. The highest-ranked factor, with a weighted mean of 3.56, was the observation of abundant career development opportunities and promotions. Similarly, the expectation of working abroad received a weighted mean of 3.56, reflecting a global outlook in the nursing profession. While the perception of support toward Master's programs and professional development ranked slightly lower at 3.36, it still indicates a notable level of agreement. Students valued diverse experiences, with a weighted mean of 3.49, based on exposure to different and varied cases. The anticipation of a high salary, with a weighted mean of 3.43, showcased nuanced expectations. Access to research opportunities, although still strong, ranked slightly lower at 3.27, indicating a moderate level of agreement. Strong belief in positive relationships with colleagues and superiors (3.53), a sense of job security (3.45), and expectations of engagement in social activities and professional development (3.52) were evident, reflecting a holistic view of the nursing profession. Despite strong agreement overall, the perception of fewer opportunities to work autonomously in their chosen field received a weighted mean of 3.37.

3.5 *Test of Significance Between the Career Preferences of BSN Graduates When Grouped According to Profile Variables*

In testing the significance between the career preferences of BSN Graduates when group according to profile variables, the results of the chisquare tests across age, sex, and GWA categories indicate that these demographic factors do not have a significant association with the employment status of the nursing graduates. The consistent career preference for nursing among all respondents emphasize the strong inclination towards nursing as a career choice.

However, in terms of testing the significance between their preferred area of working and profile variables, findings reveal a significant association between age and preferred working area, indicating that age may play a role in determining where nursing graduates prefer to work. However, gender, academic performance, and career preference do not significantly influence the preferred working area of the nursing graduates.

3.6 *Test of Significance Between the Ten-Year Career Expectations of Graduates and their Career Preference.*

In testing the significant difference between ten-year career expectation and career preferences revealed a notable uniformity in responses, with all participants expressing a preference for a career in nursing. As a result, no statistics were computed for the chi-square test since the career preference variable is constant (100% preference for nursing).

Having a career can still have factors that affect your decision and choosing it. The most influential factor, according to respondents, is the perception of more career development opportunities and promotions which ranks 1, with a weighted mean of 3.56, closely followed by the opportunity to work abroad which is also in the top rank and weighted mean 3.56.

3.7 *Test of Relationship Between the Factors That Influence their Field of Preference to their TenYear Career Expectations.*

In testing the relationship between these factors influencing their field of preference and the ten-year career expextation, F6, F7, F9, and F12 show statistically significant negative correlations with career expectations (Sig. values of 0.007, 0.017, 0.002, and 0.003, respectively). These significant correlations suggest that as the factors influencing field preferences in F6, F7, F9, and F12 increase or decrease, there are corresponding changes in the respondents' ten-year career expectations.

3.8 Intervention Plan

Based on the results of the study, Career counseling services shall be considered by PRMSU College of Nursing. Career counseling services within the nursing education framework play a crucial role in guiding students towards a fulfilling and successful professional journey. By incorporating comprehensive career counseling services, nursing education institutions can empower students to make well-informed decisions,

build realistic career expectations, and embark on a trajectory that aligns with their personal and professional aspirations.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the summary of the investigations conducted, the researchers concluded that a significant majority of the respondents were female, within the 20-24 age range, with a GWA of 1.50-1.90, and expressed a clear preference for a career in nursing. Employment data indicated that most graduates were currently employed in contractual positions, with a pronounced preference for hospital settings. Many anticipated a career abroad, while other expectations included becoming a Head Nurse, Nurse Educator, or engaging in non-nursing work. There was no significant difference in the career preferences of

BSN graduates when grouped by profile variables such as age, sex, and GWA. Similarly, there was no significant difference between the ten-year career expectations of graduates and their career preferences. The study explored factors influencing the field preferences of nursing graduates, such as career development opportunities, job security, engagement in social activities, and flexibility in working hours. Examining the relationship between these factors and ten-year career expectations revealed statistically significant negative correlations; notably, the ability to work abroad and perceptions of job security were associated with slightly lower future career expectations. The proposed intervention plan includes comprehensive career guidance, interview preparation through mock sessions, professional development seminars, mentorship programs with experienced professionals, nursing-specific job fairs, and ongoing follow-up support.

As such, several recommendations were proposed:

First, educational institutions should enhance specialized training programs tailored for hospital settings, acknowledging the strong preference for hospital environments among future nursing professionals. This could include partnerships with healthcare institutions for practical training and exposure to diverse hospital units.

Second, integrating career development programs into the curriculum is essential to prepare students for the evolving demands of the nursing profession. Workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs can provide insights into career pathways and professional growth opportunities.

Third, fostering partnerships with specialized healthcare facilities, such as those in pediatrics, oncology, and emergency care, can enrich student experiences in different clinical environments.

Fourth, promoting gender inclusivity in nursing through targeted initiatives is crucial given the field's predominantly female composition. Encouraging male participation can enhance diversity in the nursing workforce.

Fifth, prioritizing the development of soft skills, such as communication and teamwork, aligns with the strong emphasis on positive workplace relationships and job security among students.

Finally, further qualitative research is recommended to explore the underlying motivations and preferences of BSN graduates more deeply, offering nuanced insights into their career decisions.

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