

**PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF CLINICAL PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE ON
CAREER CHOICES AMONG NURSING STUDENTS IN A COLLEGE OF
NURSING SCIENCE, BENIN CITY.**

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EDO STATE

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF NURSING SCIENCE, FACULTY OF NURSING SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

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DECLARATION

This is to declare that this research project titled **"PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF CLINICAL PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE ON CAREER CHOICES AMONG NURSING STUDENTS IN A COLLEGE OF NURSING SCIENCE, BENIN CITY** was carried out by **IKE-ANYALI KHIDO GIFT**. It is solely the result of my work except where acknowledged as being derived from other person(s) or resources.

MATRICULATION NUMBER: _____

FACULTY: FACULTY OF NURSING SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **IKE-ANYALI KHIDO GIFT** with matriculation number **BMS2009029**, **FACULTY OF NURSING SCIENCES** under the supervision of **PROF. (MRS) J.A AFEMIKHE**

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External examiner

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to GOD ALMIGHTY whose infinite grace, wisdom and strength has been my anchor throughout this Journey. I also dedicate this work to my lovely family who have been my source of inspiration during the course of this work.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the perceived influence of clinical placement experiences on the career choices of nursing students in a College of Nursing Science in Benin City. Given the critical role of clinical placements in shaping students' professional decisions, understanding the impact of these experiences is essential for improving nursing education and guiding students' career paths. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed for this study. A total of 162 nursing students in their 200 and 300 levels were selected using both stratified proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires, which were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. The survey assessed students' perceptions regarding the influence of clinical placements on their career decisions, including the factors that shaped their choices and the challenges encountered. The study revealed that clinical placements had a positive influence on the career decisions of nursing students, with the majority of respondents (85%) reporting that these experiences helped clarify their career paths. Key factors influencing career choices included exposure to diverse healthcare settings, mentorship, and interactions with various healthcare professionals. Additionally, challenges such as demanding workloads and emotional stress were found to influence career decisions, with 82% of participants acknowledging that such challenges shaped their views on nursing specialties. Clinical placements play a crucial role in shaping the career choices of nursing students. While positive experiences during placements fostered clarity and confidence in career decisions, challenges such as high workloads and emotional strain also influenced students' career preferences. It is recommended that nursing schools enhance mentorship programmes and provide a supportive clinical learning environment to address the challenges faced by students. Additionally, efforts should be made to offer a broader range of clinical experiences to help students make well-informed career decisions.

Keywords: Clinical Placement, Experience, Career, Nursing Students

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nursing education is structured to provide the opportunities for nursing students to develop clinical competence, which encompasses the knowledge, skills and attitudes which are essential for efficiently promoting, maintaining and restoring health of individuals in any setting (Bryne et al., 2025). It integrates theoretical instruction with clinical experience, ensuring that students develop both foundational knowledge and essential clinical skills. While theoretical knowledge is delivered in a structured classroom through lectures, discussions and case analyses (Zhang et al., 2022), clinical placements offer students the opportunity to engage with the realities of the profession (Winnington et al., 2023). These placements are indispensable to nursing education as they enable students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to provide effective patient care, while exposing them to the complexities of a dynamic healthcare environment (Ali et al., 2022).

Although classroom learning provides the theoretical foundation, it is within clinical placements that students encounter the practical challenges inherent in healthcare delivery. These include managing uncooperative patients and their families, coping with inadequate supervision, and navigating misalignments between academic objectives and clinical practice (Kaihlanen et al., 2021). Through these experiences, students are afforded the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts, enhance their clinical skills, develop a deeper understanding of their professional responsibilities, and clarify their career aspirations within the nursing profession (Liu et al., 2022).

Clinical placements constitute the core of pre-licensure nursing education (Moxham et al., 2024a; Moxham et al., 2024b), offering diverse and meaningful learning opportunities that

facilitate professional growth and prepare students to deliver evidence-based care (Salamonson et al., 2023). Furthermore, these experiences prepare students for practice in specific specialties, fostering confidence, efficiency, and readiness to assume professional roles within those fields (Alhamidi & Alyousef, 2020; Alhamidi & Alyousef, 2023).

However, clinical placements can also present significant psychological and emotional challenges. Many students experience anxiety in response to unfamiliar environments or negative interactions, which may impede their ability to acquire practical skills and adapt effectively to clinical demands (Simpson & Sawatzky, 2020). The perceived inability to perform clinical tasks as well as errors while performing clinical procedures constitutes common stressors, which leads to anxiety (García-Velasco et al., 2025).

The quality of the clinical placement experience is largely influenced by the nature of the learning environment (Alammar et al., 2020), which actively determines the learning outcomes of these students (Woo & Li, 2020). Positive environment encompasses a healthy work culture (Chiona, 2020) that provides opportunities for students to improve their skills, confidence and build their career interests. In contrast, negative experiences generates anxiety and retards their ability to provide effective care to the patients (Cornine, 2020).

Consequently, Mbakaya et al.(2020) emphasised on the importance of robust academic–clinical partnerships in fostering positive and productive learning outcomes during clinical placements. Therefore, understanding how the various elements of the clinical environment shapes the experiences of nursing students, which directly influences their career decisions is important, to facilitate the implementation of strategies that could strengthen nursing education and improve work force balance.

1.2 Statement of Problems

The clinical environment forms the heart of nursing education , which enables students to bring their knowledge to life in patient care and makes teaching impactful (Wu et al., 2020). Clinical placements play a critical role in shaping nursing students' career trajectories. However, many students encounter challenges during their clinical experiences, such as unsupportive learning environments and limited exposure to their areas of interest, which can negatively influence their career choices (Luders et al., 2021). Studies have shown that these challenges often push students to select specialties they may not have initially considered, primarily based on where they feel most supported rather than where their passion lies (Rodríguez-García et al., 2021).

Moreover, the inconsistencies in clinical experiences across specialties can lead to an uneven distribution of nurses in the healthcare workforce, with some areas becoming overcrowded while others face shortages (Kaihlanen et al., 2021). When clinical placements are suboptimal or poorly aligned with students' professional interests, this can result in long-term effects on healthcare delivery, including reduced effectiveness in patient care and professional dissatisfaction (Anyango et al., 2024).

Additionally, it has been noted that negative clinical placement experiences may cause some students to abandon certain specialties altogether, worsening workforce gaps in critical areas such as mental health, community care, and geriatrics (Moxham et al., 2024). Therefore, addressing the quality and structure of clinical placements is essential not only for career development of nursing students but also for the broader goal of achieving equitable and effective patient care delivery across all specialties.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Aim: The aim of this study is to determine the perceived influence of clinical placement experience on the career choices among nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City.

However, the specific objectives of this study are to;

1. assess the influence of clinical placement experience on career choices among nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City.
2. identify factors within clinical placements influencing the career choices of nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City.
3. ascertain the challenges encountered by nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City during their clinical placements and their impact on their career choices.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the influence of clinical placement experience on career choices among nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City?
2. What factors within clinical placements influence the career choices of nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City?
3. What challenges are encountered by nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City during clinical placements and their impact on their career choices?

1.5 Hypothesis

H₁: There is a relationship between clinical placement experiences and challenges encountered during clinical placements on the career choices of nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study seeks to enhance awareness of how clinical placement experiences shape the future career paths of nursing students. For the nursing profession, it offers an opportunity for students to thoughtfully reflect on their clinical experiences, identify their personal strengths and areas of interest, and gain the confidence needed to make informed and purposeful career choices. By fostering such self-awareness and clarity, this supports the development of a motivated and competent nursing workforce, equipped to cater to the evolving demands of the profession.

For healthcare providers and preceptors, the findings provide valuable insights on how clinical training can be better structured to align with students' career aspirations and the practical needs of the healthcare sector. Hospitals and universities can use the evidence from this study to create more positive and supportive clinical environments that encourage students to ensure retention of nursing staff and to choose specialties where their skills are most needed.

At the society level, this study contributes to understanding why certain nursing specialties remain more desirable than others, and how targeted policies and incentives can help address these disparities. Such insights can guide workforce planning and policy decisions, ensuring that all fields are adequately staffed and that the public receives high-quality care across all specialties.

Overall, this study aims to advance the nursing profession, strengthen healthcare delivery as well as ensuring the well-being of the society by informing strategies that aims to achieve a balanced, confident, and motivated nursing workforce.

1.7 Scope / Delimitations of the Study

The study focused on the perceived influence of clinical placement experience on career choices. This study was delimited to 200 and 300 level nursing students enrolled in the three-year general nursing programme in the College of Nursing Science, UBTH , Benin City. It was confined to this group because they have been exposed to diverse nursing specialties and have gained significant clinical experience , equipping them to make fulfilling career decisions.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Career Choices: These are the specific nursing specialties nursing students in the College of Nursing Science, UBTH plan to work in, after completing their three-year programme in general nursing.

Clinical Placement Experience: This refers to the hands on training obtained across various nursing specialties since their admission into the College of Nursing Science, UBTH.

Nursing Students: These are students who are currently in their 200 and 300 level of the three-year general nursing programme in the College Of Nursing Science, UBTH and have undergone clinical placements in various nursing specialties.

Perceived Influence: This is the extent to which nursing students in the College of Nursing Science, UBTH believe their experiences in the clinical areas has shaped their career choices.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews relevant literature, focusing on the concept of clinical placement experience and its perceived influence on career choices among nursing students in a college

of nursing. It discusses the nature of clinical placement experiences and also presents the theoretical and empirical review relevant to the study.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 The Concept of Clinical Placement Experience in Nursing.

Clinical placement is the period during which nursing students apply their theoretical knowledge in the clinical environment, which provides a valuable opportunity to evaluate their own performance while receiving feedback for improvement (Bryne et al., 2025). Many nursing programs require students to complete a designated number of clinical hours to ensure they acquire the necessary skills and confidence for independent practice (Moroney et al., 2022). These experiences play a pivotal role in shaping students' learning processes and refining the practical competencies required for delivering high-quality and reliable care upon completing their nursing education (Mann et al., 2023). Clinical placements enhance clinical proficiency while promoting critical reasoning and professional growth, both of which are essential for addressing the ever-evolving challenges in healthcare (Anyango et al., 2024).

Metzger et al. (2020) explained how a welcoming and supportive clinical placement can make a real difference in how nursing students feel about their place in the profession. When students are given the opportunity to truly experience the culture of nursing in real-world settings, it helps them feel more connected and confident in their roles. However, they also point out that not all students have the same experience, as some may struggle to feel included, depending on the environment and the level of support they receive.

2.1.2 Importance of Clinical Placements in Nursing.

Clinical placements play a crucial role in pre-registration nursing programs, offering students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings (Chu et al., 2024). When these placements take place in supportive learning environments, they allow students

to effectively connect what they have learned in the classroom with practical experience, enhancing their professional growth (Luders et al., 2021).

Foster et al. (2021) outlined three importance of clinical placements to nursing students which are;

1. Integration of Theoretical Knowledge with Practice: Clinical placement provides an array of opportunities for nursing students to apply their knowledge from the classrooms in real health care settings. This is important as bridging the gap between theory and practice is a cornerstone of nursing education that enhances learning , promote better patients outcome and guarantees safety (Fathi & Ibrahim, 2023).

2. Gain Insight into the Clinical Environment and Obtain Clinical Skills: The clinical environment provides the nursing students with a variety of real life scenarios where they have to apply clinical skills to solve problems. This enables them to obtain hands on skills required in the care of the patients (Jeffries, 2022).

3. Professional Competence: Clinical placements enhance the problem solving skills of nursing students which reflects emerging professional competence .This depends largely on the quality of mentorship of the nurses in the clinical setting (Froiland et al., 2021).

2.1.3 The Concept of Career Choices in Nursing .

Nursing is a highly versatile profession that offers a wide range of specialties for practitioners to pursue (Tiliander et al., 2023). These specialties include, but are not limited to, psychiatric nursing, perioperative nursing, public health nursing, ophthalmic nursing, pediatric nursing, and geriatric nursing.

It is important to recognise that the career paths of many nursing students begin to take shape at the onset of their education (Hunt et al., 2020), with personal preferences playing a

significant role in this process (Johnson et al., 2024). These trajectories serve as a roadmap, guiding nurses toward their future within the profession, defining the unique roles and responsibilities associated with their chosen specialties, and outlining the steps required to achieve their career goals (Nashwan, 2023).

2.1.4 Factors influencing Career Choices of Nursing Students during Clinical Placements.

Nursing students' career choices are shaped by a combination of internal and external factors, both inside and outside their clinical placements with factors like age, past work experiences, and personal preferences playing a big role in guiding their career paths (Anyango et al., 2024). He also stated that students career choices are influenced by ones' personal experiences with a specialty, the media, public perception, peers, lecturers, clinical staff, and the overall practice environment.

1. Personal Experience With a Specialty: Students who have had positive experiences with a nursing specialty, whether through receiving care in that field or seeing others have good experiences are more likely to develop a career choice in that area. Other positive experiences which could also shape the career choices of nursing include close guidance by registered nurses, good relationship between the nurses and the students, dedicated clinical instructors and having a feeling of acceptance in the practice environment (Cant et al., 2021).

2. Clinical Staff: The attitude of clinical staff determines if the students will consider a future career path in a specific specialty (Panda et al., 2021). For instance, working with nurses who communicates, guides and motivates the student would improve their clinical skill acquisition as well as confidence in making decisions on where they envision themselves to be in the profession.

3. The Overall Practice Environment: The nature of the clinical setting, structure of work hours, communication style with the patients and their families and the quality of collaboration among members of the health care team collectively shape how nursing students interpret their clinical experiences and ultimately, influence their professional outlook (Tengiz & Babaoglu, 2020).

2.1.5 Challenges Encountered by Nursing Students during Clinical Placements.

Rodriguez-Garcia et al. (2021) highlighted two basic challenges students undergo in the clinical environment during clinical placements which are uncooperative patients and inadequate supervision from the nurses. Inadequate equipments for training and poor communication from clinical instructors could also pose as a barrier during clinical placements (Addisie et al., 2022).

1. Uncooperative Patients: The needs of every patient differs. Some require more intensive care than others. For a nursing student, their experience with a patient who is constantly unsatisfied with the care rendered by the nurses can disrupt the learning of the student due to physical and emotional strain created by either refusing treatments or being aggressive about ones needs, thereby creating anxiety and impeding learning (Pienaar et al., 2022).

2. Inadequate Supervision: Supervision is very important to the nursing students during clinical placements, as it improves learning and prevents uncertainty when they are being guided by the nurses on provision of care to the patients (Lee & Chiang, 2021). On the other hand, when these students do not receive feedback regarding their performances, it may create a sense of tension as to whether they are maintaining professional standard. This could create a negative perception about that environment and a desire to consider a different career path.

3. Inadequate Equipments for Training: When essential instruments needed for effective learning is lacking, it undermines the confidence of the nurse- in- training, leaving them feeling unprepared to excel in that environment (Rezakhani-Moghaddam et al., 2020).

4. Poor Communication from Preceptors: Strong interpersonal and communication skills are key qualities of a good preceptor, which help create an environment that nurtures responsible, independent, and competent nurses (Hardie et al., 2022). When such skills are lacking, the learning experience is disrupted, leaving students feeling unsupported and uninterested.

2.1.6 Strategies to Improve Clinical Placement Experience among Nursing Students

There are different forms of clinical placement models around the world, with variations across countries, with a common approach being the preceptorship model highlighting the interaction of these students with the healthcare team, as well as nurses from the academic and clinical institutions (Laugaland et al., 2021). For a positive clinical experience , certain requirements must be met (Pedregosa et al., 2020).

Splitgerber et al. (2021) identified the requirements for a positive clinical experience as the following – Complete familiarisation to the practice environment, strong academic- clinical partnerships, Impactful mentorship, a competent clinical instructor, effective supervision by preceptors and incorporation of innovative teaching strategies for better learning outcomes.

1. Complete Familiarisation to the Practice Environment: This involves exposure to the practice environment, its facilities, organisational culture as well as its challenges so as to help them build inter professional networks and make informed career choices (Berndtsson et al., 2020)

2. Strong Academic-Clinical Partnerships: They are meaningful collaborations between educational and health institutions, where both sides bring their strengths together to improve practice, learning, innovation, and research, creating a relationship that benefits the nursing students and both institutions (Markaki et al., 2021).

3. Impactful Mentorship: This involves fostering a supportive relationship between the nursing students and the nurses, who serves as mentors and are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide guidance as well as helps the mentee enhance their professional skills (Krishna et al., 2023).

4. A Competent Clinical Instructor : A clinical instructor should possess up-to date knowledge and good clinical judgment required for problem solving so as to make the environment relaxing and enhance learning outcomes (Soroush et al., 2021).

5. Effective Supervision by Preceptors: During clinical placements, nursing students work under the supervision of registered nurses who monitor and provide regular feedback to enhance their skills and improve their confidence in performing their roles as professionals (Oermann et al., 2022). This is of utmost importance because supportive and close supervisory relationship in the clinical setting creates a sense of belonging, which constitutes a positive experience for the nurse-in- training (Cant et al., 2021).

6. Incorporation of Innovative Teaching Strategies: These include teaching in a comprehensive manner for better understanding (Soroush et al., 2021), providing guidance, supervision and utilising regular feedback as a significant tool for evaluating learning outcomes, while avoiding destructive feedback at the presence of staff and clients (Labrague et al., 2020).

2.2 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review for determining the perceived influence of clinical placement experience among nursing students in a College Of Nursing, Benin City is based on the social cognitive career theory (SCCT).

2.2.1 Social Cognitive Career Theory

Lent, Brown and Hackett in 1994 developed the Social Cognitive Career Theory which originated from the self efficacy theory and the general social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura. It is a flexible theory that explains the tripartite relationship between personal, behavioural and environmental factors in influencing one's career interests (Wang et al., 2022). It also highlights the role of self efficacy and outcome expectations on the behaviour of an individual, stressing on the importance of factors external to the individual as key influences on their career decisions (Pham et al., 2024). Initially, it was made of three models which includes the interest development, choice and performance models. Currently, there are five models, with the addition of the satisfaction and career self-management models (Adebusuyi et al., 2022). The social cognitive career theory is made up of three constructs which includes self efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals.

- **Self Efficacy:** This is a construct that lays emphasis on the evaluation of one's ability to perform certain tasks, accomplish set objectives, influence and control one's environment (Waddington, 2023). It reflects the degree at which the individual displays behaviours that enables him or her to cope with challenging situations (Graham, 2022). For nursing students, career decision self efficacy refers to the assurance one has in achieving objectives as well as making meaningful career decisions (Li et al., 2025). High self efficacy increases the chances of repeating a behaviour despite being faced with difficulties (Erfanian et al., 2024).

- **Outcome Expectations:** This involves the evaluation of the outcomes of specific actions by an individual before performing, with expected benefits increasing the likelihood of its performance (Chiu et al., 2023). For instance, if the action will yield negative results such as choosing a career that would be too demanding, leading to burnout, it would be discarded. On the other hand, an action would be performed If it is expected to generate positive outcomes (Lee & Tseng, 2024).

- **Personal Goals:** This construct is in alignment with the other two constructs of the theory, self efficacy and outcome expectations and it shapes the behaviour of individuals and helps them stay focused to pursuing their aims (Chiu et al., 2023), which in this case refers to an individual's dedication towards a specific career path (Riad et al., 2025).

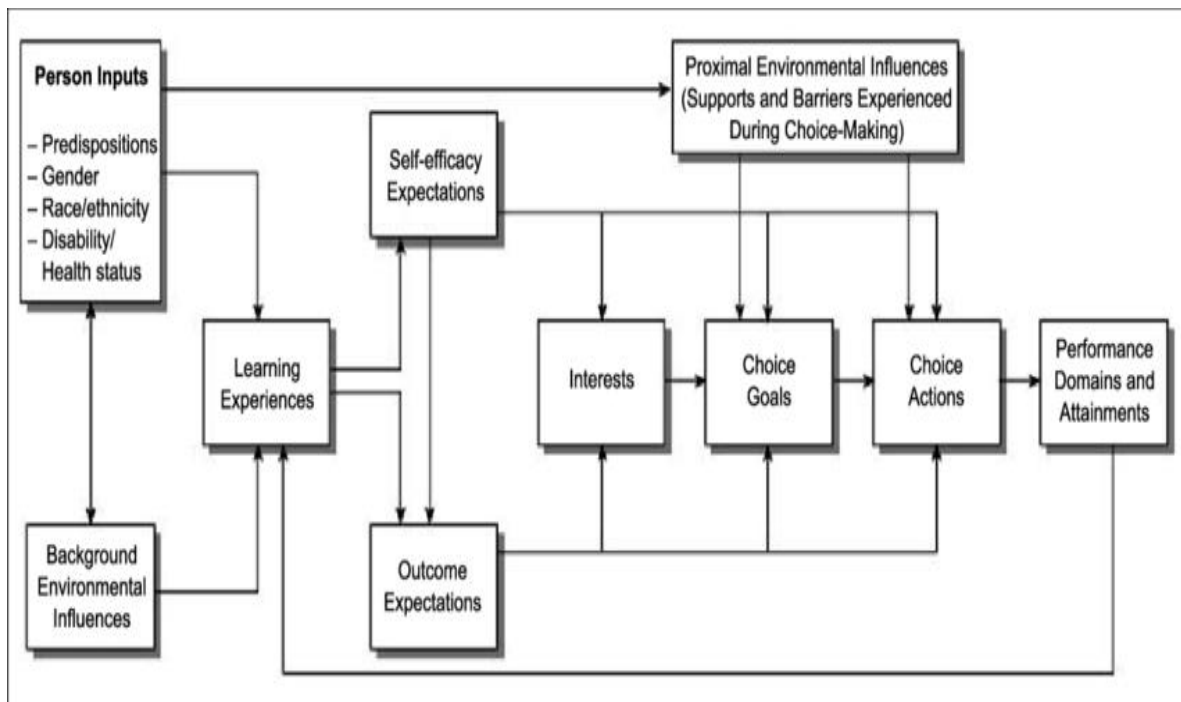


Figure 2.1: The Schematic illustration of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Adapted from Windleharth et al., 2023).

Figure 2.1 presents the Social Cognitive Career Theory which highlights the three constructs of the theory which are self efficacy, outcome expectations and goals. It also shows the interaction between the personal inputs of the individual, environmental and behavioural influences (self efficacy, outcome expectations) in influencing the performance and attainments of an individual ie how one's performance in the clinical setting influences their future career decisions.

2.2.2 Application of the Theory to the Study.

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) provides a relevant basis for understanding the influence of clinical placement experience on career choices among nursing students. It explains the role of the various constructs of the theory which are self efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals in influencing ones career decisions.

In this study, the concept of self efficacy which emphasises the assurance nursing students have in performing a particular task could also influence their career choices as the successful performance of a task creates a sense of fulfillment in them that could ignite their interest in that specialty. Their expectations regarding various specialties either as rewarding or challenging (outcome expectations) also shapes their career interests. When nursing students feel confident in their clinical abilities in a field and believe it is rewarding, it constitutes a positive experience and could make them committed to it and vice versa. Overall, this theory shows the tripartite relationship that exists between the personal, behavioural and environmental factors as they jointly determine the career outcomes of nursing students.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 The Influence of Clinical Placement Experience on Career Choices among Nursing Students.

Mbakaya et al. (2020) carried out a mixed- method study on " Nursing and Midwifery Students experiences and perception of their clinical learning environment in Malawi". A concurrent triangulation mixed methods research design was used to collect data from Nursing and Midwifery Students. Quantitative data was collected using a clinical learning environment Inventory which comprised of six subscales which are Satisfaction, Individualisation, Involvement, Task orientation and Personalisation. Focus group discussions were used to collect qualitative data. Questionnaires were given to 126 participants, with 30 students participating in 3 focus group discussions. Independent t-test and multivariate linear regression was used to analyse quantitative data while that of qualitative data was done using thematic analysis. The highest mean score was obtained from the Satisfaction subscales while the Individualisation had the lowest. It showed a statistically significant relationship between students' satisfaction with the clinical learning environment and factors such as the level of personalization and task orientation in their placements. This suggests that these elements play an important role in shaping students' experiences and potentially influence their career decisions.

Similarly, Luders et al. (2021) undertook a study on Nursing degree students' clinical placement experiences in Australia. The aim of the study was to evaluate the views of Nursing students across seven tertiary institutions in Australia using the Placement Evaluation Tool(PET). A survey design was used, distributing the placement evaluation tool to 6525 nursing students from six universities in Australia and one Technical and Further Education College (TAFE). 1263 nursing students were eventually used for the study using

the PET which comprised of 19 items rated 1-5 and had undergone placements in three Australian States from July 2019- February 2020 and about 618 (48.9%) completed a placement in intensive care with positive experiences. The total PET score was 78.3%. 29.8% were extremely satisfied with their clinical placements(10 out of 10) 11.0% were unsatisfied(with four ratings or less). The attributing causes to the variations in satisfaction in their various clinical placements is definitely to the professionalism of the nurses and other health care staff, the nature of the clinical environment and the lifestyle of the nursing students.

In Western Australia , Anyango et al. (2024) carried out a cross sectional study on the "Impact of final year clinical placements on nursing students' career planning for the graduate year and beyond". They assessed the career decision-making self-efficacy of final-year nursing students , where N was 222, in two public universities in Western Australia using the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form (CDSE-SF) as the research instrument. The goal selection and planning questions were used in the study and It was found that only 47% of participants demonstrated strong confidence in their career decision-making abilities and 53% had low confidence in making career decisions. Notably, factors such as the nature of the final clinical placement setting, the intention to seek employment in the specialty of their final placement, and students' evaluations of their clinical experiences were significantly associated with their career decision-making confidence. These findings highlighted the critical role that clinical placement environments play in enhancing nursing students' self-efficacy and influencing their future career choices.

A repeated cross-sectional study was also conducted in Australia between 2019 to 2023 by Terry et al. (2024) on "The threshold of rural placement frequency and duration" which aimed to explore the perceptions of nursing students regarding rural placements and the influence of the regularity and length of these placements to students considering that path for

employment. The sample consisted of all nursing students from an Australian regional University. The research instrument utilised in the study was an online questionnaire which included both demographic and specific questions that were centred on clinical placements. The modified version of the Nursing community APGAR tool was also used. Data were analysed using independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVAs, with significance set at $p \leq 0.05$. There were 835 respondents, resulting in a response rate of 15.4%. On average, students completed about 2.45 rural placements, each lasting around three weeks. Interestingly, the study found that rural placements did not significantly affect the career intentions of students who already lived in rural or regional areas. However, for metropolitan-based students, completing more than three rural placements or spending over sixteen cumulative weeks in rural settings made a significant difference, increasing their willingness to consider rural employment after graduation. The researchers observed that while professional and clinical experiences were important, the social environment, community interactions, and broader lifestyle factors encountered during clinical placements had a powerful influence on students' career choices. They emphasized that creating positive and supportive rural placement experiences, especially for students from urban areas, could be an effective strategy for encouraging more nurses to take up positions in rural and underserved areas.

These studies collectively highlight the nature of the clinical environment on the career choices among nursing students. Terry et al. (2024) emphasized that fostering a supportive learning environment, especially in rural communities, could help create positive experiences, encouraging them to consider career paths in underserved areas.

2.3.2 Factors within Clinical Placements influencing Career Choices among Nursing Students.

A descriptive and cross-sectional study was carried out in China by Zhang et al. (2022) on "The Clinical learning environment, supervision and future intention to work as a Nurse in nursing students" in China. They conducted a survey on nursing students who were engaged in clinical placements for at least six months in hospitals between January to March 2021, using percentages, frequencies, mean, standard deviation, t test, ANOVA and regression analysis to analyse data. The tool used for this research was the Clinical Learning Environment ,Supervision and Nurse teacher scale (CLES+T) which assessed five main areas in Clinical placement which are the supervisory relationship, pedagogical atmosphere, role of the nurse teacher, leadership style of the ward manager and the premises of nursing on the ward. Of these five scales, the highest mean score was obtained for the leadership style of the ward manager while the pedagogical atmosphere in the ward had the lowest. These findings illustrated that there was a significant correlation between the learning environment and the future intention of the nursing student to pursue a career in the field. Therefore, there is need for ward managers to create a positive and supportive teaching environment as well as foster connections among the students through constructive feedbacks. This is to improve the clinical learning experience of nursing students as well as aid in the development of professional competencies, thereby motivating them to continue in the nursing profession.

Similarly, McTier et al. (2023) undertook a modified Delphi study on " Factors influencing Nursing Students Learning during clinical placements, involving 34 nurse educators in the first round and 17 in the second, a consensus of at least 80% agreement was reached on the factors that influence student learning during clinical placements. The educators highlighted several enablers that helped students learn effectively. These included a positive workplace culture, where a supportive and collaborative environment encouraged students to engage

more fully in their learning, as well as student attitudes, with motivated students contributing to their own success. Additionally, clear communication between facilitators and students was recognized as essential for aligning expectations and fostering a productive learning experience. However, the study also pointed out several barriers that hindered student learning. These included the lack of time for teaching, where both students and facilitators felt rushed and unable to engage deeply, and short placement durations, which didn't allow students enough time to develop their skills fully. Lastly, negative attitudes from both students and facilitators were noted as significant challenges that affected the overall quality of the clinical placement experience.

Anyango et al. (2024) conducted a study in Western Australia on " The impact of final year clinical placements on nursing students career planning for the graduate year and beyond ". They utilised the career decision self efficacy scale short form, distributing questionnaire to final year students, with a population of 222 at two public universities. The participants were asked additional questions where they explained their career preferences and the reason for their career choices. The factors influencing their career choices were classified into three main groups which are the clinical environment, the individual characteristics as well as the educational factors which involves the quality of instruction and support available to nursing students during clinical placements.

In a similar study on the " Influence of clinical placement environment on career choices of final year pre- registration nurses" , Anyango et al. (2024) utilised a narrative inquiry approach using a sample size of 12 nursing students from two public universities in Western Australia. Data collection involved semi- structured individual interviews. He identified four factors within clinical placements that affects the career choices of nursing students which are the patients in that environment, the nature of the clinical environment, the interaction and attitudes of the Nurses in that environment and the nature of the mentorship received. They

emphasised on the role of independence in motivating the students to work in that specialty as well as collaboration between the nurses and other health care professionals and the role of effective supervision in creating a positive clinical experience for these nursing students. They also stated that the clinical placement experiences influenced their career decisions in three ways- It helped them discover new career opportunities, gain clarity about their professional aspiration and solidify their commitment to their chosen career path.

These studies collectively explain the role of the clinical environment and the level of support received from the nurses as key influences on the career paths of the nursing students.

2.3.3 Challenges Encountered by Nursing Students during Clinical Placements and their Impact on their Career Choices.

A study conducted by Addisie et al. (2022) on the "Challenges encountered by nursing students during clinical placements that impacts their career choices" whose objective was to explore these challenges and the factors associated with them among higher institutions in Addis Ababa City, Ethiopia, 2020. The researchers utilised a mixed method approach consisting of cross sectional and phenomenological methods with the participants being 179 undergraduate nursing students in their third and fourth year for quantitative studies and 7 strategically selected students for qualitative. Simple random sampling technique was utilised for the quantitative study and questionnaires were then administered, while telephone interviews was used to collect qualitative data. Logistic regression was used to analyse quantitative data, while content analysis using ATLAS.t software were used to analyse qualitative data. 29 nursing students which represented 16.9% of the sample reported challenges. These challenges were grouped into dimensions such as Nursing Student factors, absence of mentorship, limited support and communication from clinical instructors, inadequate equipment and lapses from the institution. The study recommended ensuring

improved supervision and communication from the clinical instructors and other nursing Staff as well as providing detailed orientation and follow up to these students before Internship.

Similarly, the study by Mbakaya et al. (2020) on " Nursing and Midwifery Students experiences and perception of their clinical learning environment in Malawi". which employed the concurrent triangulation mixed methods research design also highlighted the challenges encountered by nursing students in the clinical environment which includes limited access to essential learning resources, unsupportive clinical environment, poor relationship between the nursing staff and the students, lack of clinical supervision and inadequate resources. The study emphasizes on the need for strong academic- clinical collaborations to address these challenges.

Rezakhani-Moghaddam et al. (2020) carried out a qualitative study on the "Challenges faced by nursing students to work with nursing personnel " in the City of Khalkhar, Ardabil Province, Iran. Purposive sampling was utilised for the study and data collection was done using semi- structured interviews. Data analysis was done using MAXODA 12. The researchers findings showed that the challenges encountered by nursing students in the clinical environment were grouped into three main categories which are negative societal norms, lack of resources for learning and unsupportive clinical environment. They concluded that poor ward culture and improper allocation of resources in the clinical environment can lead to a disruption in the relationship between the Nursing Students and the Nurses, thereby hindering the quality of clinical education and career decision making.

A systematic review was undertaken by Panda et al. (2021) on the" Challenges faced by student nurses and midwives in clinical environment". It was conducted across 14 countries using 32 studies published between 1997 and 2019. It involved 853 nursing and midwifery

students, preceptors, nurses and midwives. It identified three core themes which included the individual factors, level of support available and organisational factors. It was concluded that the attitude of the clinical staff and others had a significant influence on learning, with feelings of isolation, diminished motivation and feeling of apprehension about making mistakes further demotivated them. Additional barriers included insufficient resources for training, staff shortages, heavy workloads, gaps between theory and practice. It was recommended that a deep understanding of these challenges would promote a better work environment that inculcates competence and confidence among these students, equipping them to make meaningful career decisions.

Similarly, a research was also conducted by Negm et al. (2024) on " Challenges of nursing students during clinical training". A proportionate stratified random sample was utilised for this study with the participants being, nursing students in their 2nd and 4th year as well as Interns who had completed their training in a regional hospital. A validated electronic questionnaire was administered to the participants with 29 items which had three sections and a three point Likert scale was used for the study. One section focused on the challenges encountered by nursing students during clinical placements with a focus on the teachers, health care professionals, students own ability, tasks, time management and the location of their training, which could have an impact on their career choices. The results showed varying levels of perceived challenges , with 24% students experiencing mild challenges, 62% moderate and 14% faced severe challenges. To help overcome these challenges, the study recommends improving how nursing curricula align with hands-on training, offering more support in building both technical and interpersonal skills, and creating positive, supportive clinical settings that can help students feel more confident and better prepared for their future roles.

Altogether, these studies highlight how an unsupportive clinical environment and lack of resources could impede learning ,while proffering solutions on how promoting a supportive environment and effective allocation of resources can improve the experiences of nursing students, thereby influencing their career choices.

2.4 Summary of the Literature Review

This literature review highlighted the vital role of clinical placements to nursing students in acquiring hands-on skills in the clinical environment, bridging the gap between theory and practice as well as enhancing professional competence.

The conceptual review highlighted the concept of clinical placements in nursing, its importance, factors within clinical placements influencing career choices among nursing students, concept of career choice in nursing, challenges encountered by nursing students during clinical placements that create negative learning outcomes and strategies to improve the learning outcomes among nursing students.

The theoretical review for the study was based on the Social Cognitive Career Theory by Lent et al. (1994). It explains how constructs such as self efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals could influence one's future career choices. For instance, through the concept of self efficacy, nursing students are able to gain confidence in their ability to perform clinical procedures which shapes their perception and personal goals.

Empirical studies reviewed showed evidence on the influence of clinical placement experiences on the career choices among nursing students, the factors within clinical placements that could either create a positive or negative environment, as well as the challenges encountered by nursing students during clinical placements which shapes their interests.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in achieving the intended research objectives. The strategies implemented to perform the research were integrated into the research design, research setting, target population, determination of sample size, sampling technique, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability of the instruments for data collection, procedure for data analysis and ethical consideration.

3.1 Research Design

This study utilised a descriptive cross sectional survey design, which was used to determine the perceived influence of clinical placement experience among nursing students in a College Of Nursing Science, Benin City at a specific point in time. It involved the collection of data from participants using questionnaires which outlined the characteristics of the population.

3.2 Research Setting

This study was carried out at the College of Nursing science, UBTH, located in Ugbowo, Benin City, Edo State, within the premises of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). It was initially called School of Nursing, UBTH and was founded in May 12, 1973 by Mrs Victoria Gowon. The aim of establishment was to provide theoretical and clinical education to nursing students , equipping them with the skills required to meet up with the evolving demands of healthcare locally, nationally and Internationally. It had 22 students as its pioneers who were admitted in July, 1973. It runs both basic and post basic nursing programmes.

The Basic Nursing programmes are the programmes done as direct entry programmes and it includes the Basic General Nursing and Basic Midwifery programmes which spans for three

years and the National Diploma Programme with a duration of four years, comprising of ND and HND , with each lasting for two years. The curriculum is designed according to the standard of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria (NMCN). The post basic programmes are acquired by registered nurses and they are Accident and Emergency Nursing, Paediatric Nursing, Perioperative Nursing and Ophthalmic Nursing. The Head of Department, College of Nursing Science, UBTH is Mrs A.B Eweka, who is assisted by Mrs J.E Oladokun.

This setting was considered appropriate for the study because of its accessibility and the enriched clinical placement opportunities provided to its students across various fields in nursing.

3.3 Target Population

In this study, the study population consisted of nursing students from the College of Nursing Science, UBTH who were in 200 and 300 levels of the three-year general nursing programme.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Target Population (Source: Admin, College of Nursing Science, UBTH, 2025).

COLLEGE OF NURSING SCIENCE	LEVEL	NUMBER OF NURSING STUDENTS
COLLEGE OF NURSING SCIENCE, UBTH	200	128
	300	103
	TOTAL	231

Table 3.1 shows the distribution of the target population of nursing students from the College of Nursing Science, UBTH. It consists of 200 and 300 level nursing students in the general nursing programme, with a total population of 231, with those in 200 and 300 level being 128 and 103 nursing students respectively. This indicates a slightly larger proportion of 200 level nursing students in the population.

3.3.1 Inclusion Criteria

The criteria for inclusion of participants in the study included Nursing students who ;

- Were in the three- year general nursing programme in the College of Nursing Science, UBTH.
- Were in 200 and 300 levels of study at the time of data collection
- Had undergone clinical placements in at least two nursing fields.
- Were interested and available to participate in the research.

3.3.2 Exclusion Criteria

The following Nursing Students were excluded from the study if they;

- Were In other nursing programmes besides General Nursing.
- Were in 100 level at the time of data collection
- Had not being exposed to at least two nursing specialties during clinical placements
- Were not willing and available to participate in the research.

3.4 Sample Size Determination

Sample size is the number of subjects or participants selected from a population for a study, which directly influences the accuracy, dependability and applicability of the study. Slovin's formula was used in determining the sample size. The formula is given as;

$$N = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n= Sample size

N= Population size

E= Margin of error (0.05, for 95% confidence level).

$$N = \frac{231}{1 + 231(0.05)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{231}{1 + 0.5775}$$

$$N = \frac{231}{1.5775}$$

$$N = 146.5$$

$$N = 147$$

Therefore , the sample will contain 147 nursing students.

10% attrition rate

$$\frac{10}{100} \times 147 = 14.7 = 15$$

$$\text{Total size} = 147 + 15 = 162$$

3.5 Sampling Technique

The participants for the study were selected using a stratified proportionate sampling technique to divide the population into two strata based on academic levels; 200 and 300.

Within each stratum, simple random sampling was then applied to select the number required for the study in both levels.

COLLEGE OF NURSING SCIENCE, UBTH

Given a population of 128 and 103 in 200 and 300 levels respectively, the total population is 231. The percentage of each level in the population was given as ;

$$200 \text{ level} = 128/231 \times 100 = 55.4\%$$

$$300 \text{ level} = 103/231 \times 100 = 44.6\%$$

With a sample size of 162, it was proportionally allocated as follows;

$$200 \text{ level: } 55.4/100 \times 162 = 90$$

$$300 \text{ level: } 44.6/100 \times 162 = 72$$

Therefore, 90 nursing students were selected randomly from the 200 level class and 72 nursing students from the 300 level class to make up the sample size of 162.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

A self administered questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection for the study, which aligned with the study objectives. These questions were carefully designed to provide a deeper understanding of the topic as well as its significance to the study. The questionnaire was divided into four sections.

Section A: It contained three items to obtain the demographic information of the participants. These items included Age, Gender and Level of study of the participants and it involved the respondents ticking the answers applicable to them.

Section B: It contained 7 items that were used to assess the influence of clinical placement experiences on career choices among nursing students.

Section C: It was made up of 7 items that identified the factors within clinical placements influencing career choices among nursing students.

Section D: It consisted of 7 items that ascertained the challenges encountered by nursing students during clinical placements and their impact on their career choices.

A Likert scale was used to measure responses ranging from “Strongly disagree to “Strongly agree” from Section B to D. Each response was assigned a number from 1, 2, 3, 4 which were Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree respectively.

3.7 Validity of the Instrument

Validity refers to how well a research instrument accurately measures what it was designed to measure as well as being in line with the objectives (Ahmad & Ishtiaq, 2021). The validity of the instrument utilised in the study was verified by a clinical instructor and a statistician to ensure face and content validity. The validated version was then submitted to the project supervisor for corrections. Corrections made were effected and it was then approved by the project supervisor before administering it to the participants.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability refers to the ability of the research instrument to produce the same results when used severally under similar conditions (Kennedy, 2022). To ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was carried out by administering 17 questionnaires, which accounted for 10% of the intended sample size, at the Edo State College of Nursing Sciences, Benin City. The responses were inputted into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 26.0 and was run using Cronbach's Alpha. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.71 was obtained, which indicated that the instrument had a good internal consistency and was therefore reliable.

3.9 Method of Data Collection.

This study made use of self administered questionnaires in data collection. Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee, University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). An approval was also gotten from the Head of Department at the College of Nursing Science, UBTH. On obtaining approval, informed consent was obtained from the respondents using the consent form, to explain the purpose of the research in a comprehensive manner. It was then signed by those who indicated interest. This was carried out before the questionnaires were distributed during their break to avoid encroaching into their study time. To promote honest responses, the respondents were reassured that both their identities and information will remain confidential.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

After obtaining the questionnaire from the respondents, it was then examined for thoroughness of information. Data was analysed using the Statistical package in Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. Two types of data analysis were performed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentages, mean) for the objectives while inferential statistics, involved using Chi square test for the hypothesis. A significance level of 0.05 was used.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee, UBTH which is an institutional requirement aimed at guaranteeing the safety and dignity of the participants of the study.

Informed Consent: This involved the provision of information to the participants in a comprehensive manner, using a consent form, to ensure they understand what the research is about before they voluntarily participate in it.

Justice: This ensured that the participants were selected fairly, giving each individual a chance of being chosen for the research as well as treating each of the respondents equally.

Autonomy: The researcher ensured that the participants had the right to make their own decision regarding their participation in the research. This will include the right to decline to be involved in the study and to also leave at any time they want to.

Non Maleficence: This implied doing no harm to the participants of the research, either physically or psychologically during the course of the research.

Ensuring Anonymity and Confidentiality: The researcher provided reassurance to the respondents that their identities and responses will be kept private and this will to ensure they provide honest answers to the questions.

Avoidance of Plagiarism: The researcher ensured that the sources were adequately paraphrased, well documented and cited correctly so as to avoid plagiarism.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter deals with the representation of data collected from respondents on the Perceived Influence of Clinical Placement Experience on Career Choices Among Nursing Students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City. A total of 162 questionnaires were distributed to nursing students from the College of Nursing Science, UBTH who were in 200 and 300 levels, out of which 160 was properly filled and valid for data analysis, giving a response rate of 98.8%.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n = 160)	Percent (%)
Age		
18 - 21	65	40.6
22 - 25	55	34.4
26 – 29	28	17.5
30 and above	12	7.5
Gender		
Male	48	30.0
Female	112	70.0
Level		
200	90	56.3
300	70	43.7

Table 4.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents (n = 160), revealing a varied distribution across age, gender, and academic level. The majority of the respondents were aged 18–21 years (40.6%), followed by those aged 22–25 years (34.4%), 26–29 years (17.5%), and 30 years and above (7.5%). This indicates that most of the nursing students were within the younger age brackets, which is typical of undergraduate student populations.

In terms of gender, females accounted for the majority of the respondents (70.0%), while males made up 30.0%, highlighting the female-dominated nature of the nursing profession. Regarding academic level, a slightly higher proportion of students were in 200 level (56.3%) compared to those in 300 level (43.7%). These findings provide a clear picture of the demographic composition of the nursing students involved in the study and help in understanding how these characteristics may influence their clinical experiences and career choices.

Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the influence of clinical placement experience on career choices among nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City?

Table 4.2: The Influence of Clinical Placement Experience on Career Choices Among Nursing Students

Mean cut-off = 2.5

Table 4.2 presents the responses to Research Question 1, highlighting the influence of clinical

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Remark
My clinical placement experience helped me gain clarity about the nursing career path I want to pursue.	80 (50.0)	60 (37.5)	15 (9.4)	5 (3.1)	3.3	Positive
Working with various health care professionals during my clinical placement shaped my perception of various nursing specialties.	75 (46.9)	65 (40.6)	15 (9.4)	5 (3.1)	3.3	Positive
I feel more confident about my career decision in nursing after completing clinical placements in various settings.	70 (43.8)	66 (41.3)	18 (11.3)	6 (3.8)	3.3	Positive
Positive experiences during clinical placements have encouraged me to pursue a nursing career in specific areas.	65 (40.6)	70 (43.8)	20 (12.5)	5 (3.1)	3.2	Positive
Clinical placements have increased my understanding of the demands and responsibilities of different nursing roles.	78 (48.8)	60 (37.5)	17 (10.6)	5 (3.1)	3.3	Positive
Clinical placements have exposed me to various aspects of healthcare beyond clinical practice, which has influenced my career aspirations in nursing.	60 (37.5)	72 (45.0)	20 (12.5)	8 (5.0)	3.2	Positive
My clinical placements have clarified my interest in pursuing either direct patient care or administrative roles in nursing.	68 (42.5)	65 (40.6)	20 (12.5)	7 (4.4)	3.2	Positive
	Grand Mean				3.3	Positive

placement experience on the career choices of nursing students in a College of Nursing

Science, Benin City. The highest mean score (3.3) was recorded across multiple items: “My clinical placement experience helped me gain clarity about the nursing career path I want to pursue,” “Working with various health care professionals during my clinical placement shaped my perception of various nursing specialties,” “I feel more confident about my career decision in nursing after completing clinical placements in various settings,” and “Clinical placements have increased my understanding of the demands and responsibilities of different nursing roles.” These were followed by items with a mean score of 3.2, including “Positive experiences during clinical placements have encouraged me to pursue a nursing career in specific areas,” “Clinical placements have exposed me to various aspects of healthcare beyond clinical practice, which has influenced my career aspirations in nursing” and “My clinical placements have clarified my interest in pursuing either direct patient care or administrative roles in nursing.” With a grand mean of 3.3, all items reflected a positive influence of clinical placement on the students’ career choices, based on the 4-point Likert scale where a mean score above the cut-off point of 2.5 indicates a positive perception.

Research Question 2: What factors within clinical placements influence the career choices of nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City?

Table 4.3: The Factors Within Clinical Placement Influencing Career Choices Among Nursing Students

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Remarks
The type of clinical placements I have experienced has influenced my preferences for a specific nursing career path.	72 (45.0)	66 (41.3)	15 (9.4)	7 (4.4)	3.3	Factor
The mentorship and supervision I received during clinical placements have played a significant role in shaping my career choices in nursing.	78 (48.8)	64 (40.0)	14 (8.8)	4 (2.5)	3.4	Factor
Exposure to diverse patient populations during clinical placements has influenced my interest in pursuing specific nursing roles.	70 (43.8)	68 (42.5)	15 (9.4)	7 (4.4)	3.3	Factor
The resources and learning environment provided during clinical placements have influenced my career decision-making in nursing.	68 (42.5)	65 (40.6)	20 (12.5)	7 (4.4)	3.2	Factor
The opportunity to participate in critical decision-making processes during clinical placements has informed my career choices in nursing.	64 (40.0)	66 (41.3)	22 (13.8)	8 (5.0)	3.2	Factor
The guidance and support I received from colleagues and mentors during my clinical placements have significantly influenced my decision to pursue a long-term career in a specific nursing specialty.	76 (47.5)	62 (38.8)	15 (9.4)	7 (4.4)	3.3	Factor
Through my clinical placements, I have had the opportunity to experience various nursing specialties, which has helped me visualise myself working in specific areas in nursing.	74 (46.3)	67 (41.9)	13 (8.1)	6 (3.8)	3.3	Factor
	Grand Mean				3.3	Factor

Mean cut-off = 2.5

Table 4.3 presents the responses to Research Question 2, identifying the factors within clinical placements that influence nursing students' career choices in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City. The highest mean score (3.4) was recorded for the item stating that "The mentorship and supervision I received during clinical placements have played a significant role in shaping my career choices in nursing." This was followed by a cluster of items each with a mean score of 3.3, including "The type of clinical placements I have experienced has influenced my preferences for specific nursing career paths," "Exposure to diverse patient populations during clinical placements has influenced my interest in pursuing specific nursing roles," "The guidance and support I received from colleagues and mentors during my clinical placements have significantly influenced my decision to pursue a long-term career in a specific nursing specialty," and "Through my clinical placements, I have had the opportunity to experience various nursing specialties, which has helped me visualize myself working in specific areas in nursing." Two items recorded a slightly lower mean of 3.2, namely, "The resources and learning environment provided during clinical placements have influenced my career decision-making in nursing" and "The opportunity to participate in critical decision-making processes during clinical placements has informed my career choices in nursing." With a grand mean of 3.3, all items were identified as influential factors, indicating that various elements within clinical placements significantly impact nursing students' career decisions.

Research Question 3: What challenges are encountered by nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City during clinical placements and their impact on their career choices?

Table 4.4: The Challenges Encountered by Nursing Students During Clinical Placements and their Impact on their Career Choices

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Remark
The demanding workload during my clinical placements influenced my chosen career path in nursing.	68 (42.5)	62 (38.8)	20 (12.5)	10 (6.3)	3.2	Challenging
The emotional challenges I encountered during clinical placements, such as dealing with patient suffering or loss, have influenced my decision to reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties.	72 (45.0)	60 (37.5)	20 (12.5)	8 (5.0)	3.2	Challenging
The experiences during my clinical placements did not align with my expectations, which made me reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties.	64 (40.0)	66 (41.3)	20 (12.5)	10 (6.3)	3.2	Challenging
Limited opportunities for hands-on experience during my clinical placements discouraged me from pursuing certain nursing specialties.	70 (43.8)	63 (39.4)	18 (11.3)	9 (5.6)	3.2	Challenging
The lack of guidance and mentorship during my clinical placements informed my decision in my chosen career path in nursing.	60 (37.5)	68 (42.5)	22 (13.8)	10 (6.3)	3.1	Challenging
Challenging working conditions during my clinical placements, such as high patient-to-nurse ratio, made me reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties.	74 (46.3)	60 (37.5)	18 (11.3)	8 (5.0)	3.3	Challenging

Limited collaboration and poor teamwork during my clinical placements discouraged me from considering certain nursing specialties as future career options.	66 (41.3)	65 (40.6)	20 (12.5)	9 (5.6)	3.2	Challenging
	Grand Mean				3.1	Challenging

Mean cut-off = 2.5

Table 4.4 presents the responses to Research Question 3, ascertaining the challenges encountered by nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City. The highest mean score (3.3) was recorded for the item "Challenging working conditions during my clinical placements, such as high patient-to-nurse ratio, made me reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties". This was followed by a cluster of items each with a mean score of 3.2 including "The demanding workload during my clinical placements influenced my chosen career path in nursing", "The emotional challenges I encountered during clinical placements, such as dealing with patient suffering or loss, have influenced my decision to reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties", "The experiences during my clinical placements did not align with my expectations, which made me reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties", "Limited opportunities for hands-on experience during my clinical placements discouraged me from pursuing certain nursing specialties" and "Limited collaboration and poor teamwork during my clinical placements discouraged me from considering certain nursing specialties as future career options". The item "The lack of guidance and mentorship during my clinical placements informed my decision in my chosen career path in nursing recorded the lowest mean score of 3.1. With a grand mean of 3.1, all items were identified as challenging, indicating that their clinical placement experiences were perceived as being demanding.

Testing of hypothesis

H₁: There is a relationship between clinical placement experiences and challenges encountered during clinical placements on the career choices of nursing students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City.

Table 4.5: Relationship between Clinical Placement Experiences and Challenges Encountered During Clinical Placements on the Career Choices of Nursing Students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City.

Clinical placement experiences	Challenges Encountered		Test Statistics (χ^2)	df	P value	Decision
	Challenging	Non-Challenging				
Positive	98 (88.0)	29 (12.0)	0.4321	1	0.00	Rejected
Negative	72 (90.5)	21 (9.5)				

Table 4.5 shows the relationship between clinical placement experiences and the challenges encountered by nursing students during their placements. Despite whether the experience was positive or negative, students still reported encountering challenges. The chi-square test showed a statistically significant association ($p = 0.00$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that the nature of clinical experiences influences the challenges faced by students and may impact their future career choices in nursing.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the major findings of the research compared with the literature reviewed, the implications for nursing, summary, conclusion, limitations of the study, recommendations and suggestion for further studies.

5.1. Discussion of Major Findings

The study discusses the Perceived Influence of Clinical Placement Experience on Career Choices Among Nursing Students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City. The demographic characteristics of the study participants reveal important patterns in the nursing student population that can be contextualised within current research on clinical placement experiences and career choices. The study sample (N=160) showed a predominance of young adults, with 75% of respondents being 25 years or younger (40.6% aged 18-21 and 34.4% aged 22-25). Only a small proportion (7.5%) were 30 years or above, while 17.5% fell within the 26-29 age bracket. The gender distribution reflects the typical pattern in nursing education, with females comprising the majority (70%) of respondents compared to males (30%). This gender distribution aligns with the broader context of nursing education demographics seen in recent studies. For instance, this pattern can be compared to the sample characteristics in Anyango et al.'s (2024) Western Australian study, which examined final-year nursing students' career decision-making self-efficacy. Regarding academic progression, the sample included students from two levels of study, with 56.3% in their second year (200 level) and 43.7% in their third year (300 level). This distribution is particularly relevant when considering the findings of Negm et al. (2024), who studied challenges faced by nursing students at different stages of their training. The inclusion of students from different academic levels provides valuable insights into how clinical placement experiences and career

decision-making might evolve throughout the nursing education journey. The age distribution of the respondents suggests that most participants entered nursing education shortly after completing their secondary education, which could influence their clinical placement experiences and career decision-making processes. This demographic context is important when considering Mbakaya et al.'s (2020) findings on students' perceptions of their clinical learning environment, as age and educational background can influence how students interact with and perceive their clinical experiences. The predominance of younger students in the sample also relates to Terry et al.'s (2024) findings regarding the influence of clinical placements on career choices, particularly in terms of how younger students might be more adaptable to different clinical environments and potentially more open to various career pathways in nursing.

The Influence of Clinical Placement Experience on Career Choices Among Nursing Students

The findings from this study reveal that majority (85%) of respondents reported that their clinical placement experiences positively influenced their career choices, while only 15% indicated negative influences. This overwhelmingly positive impact underscores the critical role of clinical placements in shaping nursing students' career paths. Table 4.2 provides further insight into specific aspects of this influence, with all measured items yielding positive responses and a grand mean of 3.3 (above the 2.5 cut-off). Half of the respondents (50%) strongly agreed that clinical placements helped them gain clarity about their desired nursing career path, with an additional 37.5% agreeing with this statement. Similarly, 46.9% strongly agreed and 40.6% agreed that working with various healthcare professionals during placements shaped their perceptions of different nursing specialties. These findings align with the study by Anyango et al. (2024), which demonstrated that clinical placement environments play a critical role in enhancing nursing students' self-efficacy and influencing their future

career choices. Anyango's research revealed that factors such as the nature of the clinical placement setting and students' evaluations of their clinical experiences were significantly associated with their career decision-making confidence. The current study supports this conclusion, with 85.1% of respondents indicating increased confidence about career decisions after completing clinical placements in various settings. The high percentage (84.4%) of students who reported that positive experiences during clinical placements encouraged them to pursue nursing careers in specific areas corresponds with the findings of Luders et al. (2021), who found that satisfaction with clinical placements varied widely depending on factors such as the professionalism of staff and the nature of the clinical environment. In the current study, 86.3% of respondents agreed that clinical placements increased their understanding of the demands and responsibilities of different nursing roles, suggesting that exposure to real-world nursing practice provides valuable insights that influence career choices. Terry et al. (2024) found that the social environment, community interactions, and broader lifestyle factors encountered during clinical placements had a powerful influence on students' career choices. This is consistent with the current findings where 82.5% of respondents indicated that clinical placements exposed them to various aspects of healthcare beyond clinical practice, which influenced their career aspirations. Furthermore, 83.1% of students in this study reported that clinical placements clarified their interest in pursuing either direct patient care or administrative roles in nursing. The overwhelmingly positive influence of clinical placements on career choices found in this study reinforces Anyango et al.'s (2024) identification of key factors within clinical placements that affect career choices, including patient interactions, the nature of the clinical environment, interactions with nurses, and the quality of mentorship received. The high positive response rates across all items in Table 4.2 suggest that these factors may be well-managed within the clinical placement experiences provided to nursing students in this college in Benin City. These findings

highlight the importance of well-structured clinical placements in nursing education, as they not only provide practical skills but also help shape students' professional identities and career aspirations. The results underscore the need for nursing educators and clinical placement coordinators to continue developing high-quality placement experiences that expose students to diverse aspects of nursing practice, facilitate meaningful interactions with healthcare professionals, and provide supportive environments for learning and career exploration.

The Factors Within Clinical Placement Influencing Career Choices Among Nursing Students

The findings regarding factors within clinical placements that influence nursing students' career choices reveal significant patterns that align with previous research. The study found that an overwhelming majority (86%) of nursing students identified clinical placement elements as significant factors in their career decisions, with only 14% indicating otherwise. This strong influence of clinical placements on career decision-making corresponds with Anyango et al.'s (2024) findings in Western Australia, where clinical placement environments were found to play a critical role in enhancing nursing students' self-efficacy and influencing their future career choices. The highest-rated factor was mentorship and supervision during clinical placements (mean score 3.4), with 88.8% of students either agreeing or strongly agreeing about its significance. This finding aligns with Anyango et al.'s (2024) identification of mentorship quality as one of four key factors affecting career choices. Similarly, McTier et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of clear communication between facilitators and students in fostering productive learning experiences. The study revealed that exposure to diverse patient populations and various nursing specialties (both with mean scores of 3.3) significantly influenced career decisions, with 86.3% agreement rates. This

aligns with Luders et al.'s (2021) Australian study, which found that the nature of the clinical environment and professionalism of healthcare staff were key factors in students' satisfaction and career choices. The resources and learning environment (mean score 3.2) and opportunity for critical decision-making (mean score 3.2) were also identified as influential factors. These findings echo Mbakaya et al.'s (2020) research in Malawi, which demonstrated a significant relationship between students' satisfaction and factors such as personalisation and task orientation in their placements. The overall grand mean of 3.3 across all factors indicates a strong collective influence of clinical placement experiences on career decision-making. This robust finding supports Terry et al.'s (2024) research, which highlighted how the quality of clinical experiences, including social environment and community interactions, powerfully influenced students' career choices. These results suggest that creating positive clinical learning environments with strong mentorship components could effectively guide nursing students toward their career paths, a conclusion supported by current literature. The findings also align with Negm et al.'s (2024) recommendations for improving how nursing curricula align with hands-on training and creating supportive clinical settings to help students feel more confident in their career decisions.

The Challenges Encountered by Nursing Students During Clinical Placements and their Impact on Their Career Choices

The findings show that the majority of students in this study recognised clinical placement elements as significant factors shaping their career decisions, it is equally important to consider the obstacles they encounter in these environments, as these can profoundly affect both their learning experiences and future professional intentions. Consistent with the findings of Addisie et al. (2022), who reported that 16.9% of nursing students experienced notable problems during clinical placements, the current study also suggests that a non-

negligible proportion of students face difficulties that may hinder their career decision-making. Addisie and colleagues identified challenges across several dimensions, including student-related factors, the role of clinical instructors, the attitudes of practicing nurses, and the overall clinical setting. These dimensions align closely with the factors explored in this study, such as the quality of mentorship, the learning environment, and the support received from colleagues. Negm et al. (2024) further elaborated on the range of challenges nursing students face, categorising them into issues related to teachers, healthcare professionals, students' own abilities, the complexity of tasks, time management, and the location of training. Their findings revealed that while 24% of students experienced mild challenges, a significant 62% faced moderate challenges, and 14% encountered severe difficulties during clinical training. These statistics mirror the present study's observation that, despite the generally positive influence of clinical placements, a subset of students may struggle, potentially impacting their confidence and willingness to pursue certain nursing specialties. The present study's results also highlight the importance of mentorship and supervision, with 88.8% of students agreeing that these factors played a significant role in their career decisions. This finding echoes the work of Anyango et al. (2024), who identified the quality of mentorship as a crucial determinant of career choice, and McTier et al. (2023), who emphasised the enabling effect of a positive workplace culture and supportive relationships. However, both studies also noted that negative attitudes, insufficient teaching time, and short placement durations can act as barriers to effective learning and career development. Moreover, the exposure to diverse patient populations and the opportunity to participate in critical decision-making processes were recognized as influential, yet these experiences can also present challenges if students feel unprepared or unsupported. As noted by Mbakaya et al. (2020), the level of personalisation and task orientation within placements significantly affects student satisfaction, suggesting that when

students are overwhelmed by complex tasks or lack adequate guidance, their overall experience-and, consequently, their career intentions-may suffer. In summary, while clinical placements are generally viewed as pivotal in guiding nursing students' career choices, the challenges encountered within these environments cannot be overlooked. The findings from this study, in conjunction with the reviewed literature, underscore the need for nursing education programs to address these challenges proactively. Strategies such as enhancing mentorship, aligning curricula with practical demands, improving the clinical learning environment, and providing robust support systems are essential for helping students overcome obstacles and make informed, confident career choices. By addressing these challenges, nursing schools and clinical partners can better ensure that clinical placements serve as positive, formative experiences that inspire students to pursue fulfilling and needed roles within the nursing profession.

5.2 Implications for Nursing

The findings of this study carry significant implications for nurses, particularly those involved in clinical placements and mentorship programs. Nurses who are assigned to mentor or supervise students during clinical placements play a crucial role in shaping the professional development of future nursing practitioners. The study highlights the importance of high-quality mentorship, where nurses can provide guidance, support, and constructive feedback that helps students gain clarity about their career aspirations. Effective mentorship can inspire students to explore various nursing specialties, refine their career goals, and make informed decisions about their professional futures.

Nurses also need to recognize the broader impact that clinical placements have on students' career decisions. Exposure to diverse patient populations and various aspects of nursing practice is pivotal in influencing students' career paths. As such, nurses in clinical settings

should be encouraged to create an inclusive, supportive, and dynamic environment where students can observe and actively engage in patient care. This exposure allows students to understand the real-world demands and responsibilities of different nursing roles, helping them develop a clearer sense of direction regarding their career choices.

Furthermore, nurses can contribute to shaping students' perspectives by fostering positive professional relationships and collaborative teamwork. The study shows that students' interactions with nurses and other healthcare professionals significantly impact their career decisions. Nurses should, therefore, strive to be role models who embody the values and professionalism of the nursing profession, as these interactions can profoundly influence a student's career aspirations.

Finally, the challenges identified in the study such as inadequate mentorship, overwhelming tasks, and unstructured learning environments serve as a call for nurses and clinical educators to collaborate in creating more effective, supportive placements. By addressing these challenges and improving the clinical learning environment, nurses can help ensure that clinical placements remain positive and formative experiences for students. This, in turn, can lead to a well-prepared and motivated nursing workforce, ultimately benefiting both the healthcare system and patient care outcomes.

5.3 Summary

Clinical placements are a cornerstone of nursing education, offering students the opportunity to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical skills in real-world healthcare settings. These experiences are essential in shaping the professional identity and career decisions of nursing students, as they provide early exposure to the responsibilities, challenges, and rewards of various nursing specialties. Understanding the influence of clinical placement

experiences on career choices is crucial for improving nursing education, guiding workforce planning, and ensuring the development of competent and motivated healthcare professionals. This study determines the perceived influence of clinical placement experiences on career choices among nursing students in a College of Nursing Science in Benin City. The study was guided by three key objectives: To assess the influence of clinical placement experience on career choices among nursing students, to identify factors within clinical placements that influence career choices and to assess the challenges encountered by nursing students during clinical placements and their impact on career choices. A total of 162 nursing students in their 200 and 300 levels were selected using both stratified proportionate and simple random sampling techniques to ensure representation across academic levels. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires and analysed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0.

The demographic data revealed that most respondents were young adults aged 18–25, predominantly female (70%), and in their second or third year of nursing education. These characteristics reflect common trends in nursing training and provide context for interpreting how clinical experiences influence professional choices. The findings indicate that clinical placements have a significant positive influence on career choices, with 85% of respondents acknowledging a beneficial impact. These experiences helped students gain clarity on their career paths and increased interest in specific areas of nursing. Mentorship, interaction with healthcare teams, and exposure to diverse patient care scenarios emerged as key influencing factors. Additionally, students identified specific elements within placements, such as the quality of mentorship, opportunities to explore different specialties, hands-on practice, and patient interactions as pivotal in shaping their professional preferences. A supportive and structured learning environment was seen as vital in enhancing confidence and motivation toward career decision-making. However, the study also found that challenges during clinical

placements influenced career choices. These included heavy workloads, emotional strain, lack of guidance, and inadequate supervision. Despite these obstacles, the majority of students still viewed placements as essential to their growth and professional development. About 82% of the respondents admitted that these challenges had an impact, either positive or negative on their career preferences.

The statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship between clinical placement experiences and the challenges encountered on their career choices, suggesting that students' perceptions of their placements directly affect their career direction. The study emphasises the importance of well-structured and supportive clinical placements in guiding nursing students' career choices. It recommends strengthening mentorship programs, offering varied and rich clinical experiences, and addressing the challenges students face in the clinical environment. These improvements can help students make more informed, confident, and enduring career decisions within the nursing profession.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study emphasises the significant role that clinical placements play in shaping the career choices of nursing students in a College of Nursing Science in Benin City. The findings demonstrate that positive clinical placement experiences, marked by quality mentorship, exposure to diverse nursing specialties, and meaningful interactions with healthcare professionals, greatly influence students' professional development and career decisions. These placements not only provide essential hands-on experience but also guide students in refining their career goals, building their confidence, and exploring various pathways within the nursing profession.

However, the study also highlights challenges that nursing students face during clinical placements, such as inadequate mentorship, overwhelming tasks, and unstructured environments, which can affect their learning and career decision-making. To address these issues, it is crucial for nursing educators, clinical mentors, and healthcare facilities to work collaboratively in creating supportive, well-structured placements that foster both learning and career exploration.

Overall, this study underscores the importance of high-quality clinical placements in nursing education. By improving mentorship, enhancing the clinical learning environment, and addressing the challenges faced by students, nursing programs can better prepare students for successful, fulfilling careers. The insights gained from this research can inform the development of nursing curricula and clinical training programs, ensuring that they meet the evolving needs of nursing students and the healthcare system as a whole.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted at a single College of Nursing Science in Benin City, which may limit the generalisability of the results to other nursing programs or institutions in different regions. The unique characteristics of the study population, including their specific educational environment and clinical placements, may not reflect the experiences of nursing students in other settings.

Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias. Students may have provided responses that reflect social desirability or may have overestimated the positive impact of clinical placements on their career decisions.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to improve the clinical placement experience for nursing students and to better support their career decision-making:

- Nursing mentors should receive training to guide students effectively, fostering a supportive environment that encourages career exploration and professional development.
- Clinical placements should be well-structured to provide students with diverse experiences in different nursing specialties. Healthcare facilities and nursing schools should collaborate to ensure that placements are designed to expose students to a variety of patient populations, healthcare settings, and nursing roles.
- Institutions should work to address these issues by ensuring that clinical placements are adequately staffed, with sufficient time allocated for students to engage meaningfully in learning.
- Nursing students benefit from interacting with other healthcare professionals during clinical placements. Encouraging interprofessional collaboration and fostering a team-based approach to patient care can enrich students' learning experiences, broaden their perspectives, and help them make more informed career choices.
- Schools and healthcare settings should facilitate opportunities for students to work closely with professionals from various disciplines.
- Regular feedback from mentors and clinical supervisors is vital for students' development. In addition to clinical feedback, career guidance should be an integral part of the clinical placement experience.

- Nursing programs should offer counseling services and career development workshops to help students make informed decisions about their career paths based on their clinical experiences.

5.7 Suggestion for Further Studies

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several avenues for further research are suggested to build on the understanding of how clinical placements influence nursing students' career choices and to address some of the identified gaps:

- Future research could adopt a longitudinal design to track nursing students' career choices and professional development over time, from their clinical placements through to their early years in practice. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how clinical experiences influence long-term career trajectories and how career decisions evolve after graduation.
- A comparative study involving nursing students from multiple institutions, both within Benin City and in other regions, could provide valuable insights into how institutional factors (such as curriculum design, mentorship programs, and clinical environments) affect career decision-making. This would allow for a broader understanding of the role clinical placements play in nursing education across diverse settings.

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APPENDIX I

CONSENT FORM

Dear Respondents,

I am a 500 level Student of the Faculty of Nursing Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. I am currently carrying out a research study on the “ **Perceived Influence of Clinical Placement Experience on Career Choices among Nursing Students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City**”.

You will be required to complete a questionnaire which should take about 10 minutes. All responses provided will be kept confidential.

By ticking Yes below, you acknowledge that you have read the above information and understood that you have provided consent to be a participant in the study, which could be withdrawn at any time. Deciding not to participate will have no negative effect on you.

Yes, I wish to participate in the Study ()

No, I do not wish to participate in the Study ()

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX II

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL SURGICAL NURSING

FACULTY OF NURSING SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,

BENIN CITY

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF CLINICAL
PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE ON CAREER CHOICES AMONG NURSING
STUDENTS IN A COLLEGE OF NURSING SCIENCE , BENIN CITY.**

Dear Respondents

I am a student of the above-named institution currently conducting a research study titled **“Perceived Influence of Clinical Placement Experience on Career Choices Among Nursing Students in a College of Nursing Science, Benin City”**. This questionnaire is designed to collect relevant information for academic purposes. Kindly respond as honestly as possible. Your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

INSTRUCTION: Please tick the most suitable answers.

Age: 18-21 () 22-25 () 26-29 () 30 and above ()

Gender: Male () Female ()

Level: 200 () 300 ()

SECTION B: INFLUENCE OF CLINICAL PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE ON CAREER CHOICES AMONG NURSING STUDENTS.

INSTRUCTION: Please use the scale below to tick the most suitable answers in the boxes below. 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly agree.

S/N	QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4
1	My clinical placement experience helped me gain clarity about the nursing career path I want to pursue.				
2	Working with various health care professionals during my clinical placement shaped my perception of various nursing specialties.				
3	I feel more confident about my career decision in nursing after completing clinical placements in various				

	settings.				
4	Positive experiences during clinical placements have encouraged me to pursue a nursing career in specific areas.				
5	Clinical placements have increased my understanding of the demands and responsibilities of different nursing roles.				
6	Clinical placements have exposed me to various aspects of healthcare beyond clinical practice, which has influenced my career aspirations in nursing.				
7	My clinical placements have clarified my interest in pursuing either direct patient care or administrative roles in nursing.				

SECTION C : FACTORS WITHIN CLINICAL PLACEMENT INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICES AMONG NURSING STUDENTS .

INSTRUCTION: Please use the scale below to tick the appropriate answers in the boxes below. 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly agree.

S/N	QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4
1	The type of clinical placements I have experienced has influenced my preferences for specific nursing career paths.				

2	The mentorship and supervision I received during clinical placements have played a significant role in shaping my career choices in nursing.				
3	Exposure to diverse patient populations during clinical placements has influenced my interest in pursuing specific nursing roles.				
4	The resources and learning environment provided during clinical placements have influenced my career decision-making in nursing.				
5	The opportunity to participate in critical decision-making processes during clinical placements has informed my career choices in nursing.				
6	The guidance and support I received from colleagues and mentors during my clinical placements have significantly influenced my decision to pursue a long-term career in a specific nursing specialty.				
7	Through my clinical placements, I have had the opportunity to experience various nursing specialties, which has helped me visualise myself working in specific areas in nursing.				

SECTION D: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY NURSING STUDENTS DURING CLINICAL PLACEMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THEIR CAREER CHOICES.

INSTRUCTION: Please use the scale below to tick the appropriate answers in the boxes below. 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly agree.

S/N	QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4
1	The demanding workload during my clinical placements influenced my chosen career path in nursing.				

2	The emotional challenges I encountered during clinical placements, such as dealing with patient suffering or loss, have influenced my decision to reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties.				
3	The experiences during my clinical placements did not align with my expectations, which made me reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties.				
4	Limited opportunities for hands-on experience during my clinical placements discouraged me from pursuing certain nursing specialties.				
5	The lack of guidance and mentorship during my clinical placements informed my decision in my chosen career path in nursing.				
6	Challenging working conditions during my clinical placements, such as high patient-to-nurse ratio made me reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties.				
7	Limited collaboration and poor teamwork during my clinical placements discouraged me from considering certain nursing specialties as future career options.				

APPENDIX III

RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENT

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	No. of Items
0.70	0.70	21

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
My clinical placement experience helped me gain clarity about the nursing career path I want to pursue.	53.4931	15.077	-.047	.701
Working with various health care professionals during my clinical placement shaped my perception of various nursing specialties.	54.1111	15.302	.204	.210
I feel more confident about my career decision in nursing after completing clinical placements in various settings.	53.4167	15.126	-.061	.185
Positive experiences during clinical placements have encouraged me to pursue a	87.3188	27.590	-.123	.099

nursing career in specific areas.				
Clinical placements have increased my understanding of the demands and responsibilities of different nursing roles.	87.4813	26.138	.053	.092
Clinical placements have exposed me to various aspects of healthcare beyond clinical practice, which has influenced my career aspirations in nursing.	53.4931	15.077	-.047	.565
My clinical placements have clarified my interest in pursuing either direct patient care or administrative roles in nursing.	53.2986	14.141	.055	.196
The type of clinical placements I have experienced has influenced my preferences for a specific nursing career path.	87.3188	27.590	-.123	.099
The mentorship and supervision I received during clinical placements have played a significant role in shaping my career choices in nursing.	87.4813	26.138	.053	.092
Exposure to diverse patient populations during clinical placements has influenced my interest in pursuing specific nursing roles.				
The resources and learning environment provided during clinical placements have influenced my career decision-	87.2313	27.034	-.044	.078

making in nursing.				
The opportunity to participate in critical decision-making processes during clinical placements has informed my career choices in nursing.	87.3188	27.590	-.123	.099
The guidance and support I received from colleagues and mentors during my clinical placements have significantly influenced my decision to pursue a long-term career in a specific nursing specialty.	87.3188	27.590	-.123	.099
Through my clinical placements, I have had the opportunity to experience various nursing specialties, which has helped me visualise myself working in specific areas in nursing.	87.4813	26.138	.053	.092
The demanding workload during my clinical placements influenced my chosen career path in nursing.	87.4500	25.582	.125	.071
The emotional challenges I encountered during clinical placements, such as dealing with patient suffering or loss, have influenced my decision to reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties.	87.3188	27.590	-.123	.099
The experiences during my clinical placements did not align	87.4813	26.138	.053	.092

with my expectations, which made me reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties.

Limited opportunities for hands-on experience during my clinical placements discouraged me from pursuing certain nursing specialties.	87.3188	27.590	-.123	.099
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The lack of guidance and mentorship during my clinical placements informed my decision in my chosen career path in nursing.	87.4813	26.138	.053	.092
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Challenging working conditions during my clinical placements, such as high patient- to-nurse-ratio made me reconsider pursuing certain nursing specialties.

Limited collaboration and poor teamwork during my clinical placements discouraged me from considering certain nursing specialties as future career options.	87.3188	27.590	-.123	.099
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Comment: The reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a result of 0.71, for the overall scale. Additionally, the Cronbach's Alpha of 0.52 when the items are standardised. These values suggest a good level of internal consistency among the items in this scale.
