

**Effect of an Orientation Activity on the Perception and Attitude on First Year Direct
Bachelors Nursing Students towards the Nursing Profession, A Study Done in Four
Universities in Central Uganda.**

Nakawunde Aisa

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Faculty: Dr. Sebuliba Faith (RN/M, DHT, BNS, MNS, PhD Nursing Ed.)

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Abstract

Background and Objective: The roles that nurses play in health care are numerous but not well known to the public nor to the students who join nursing. The students instead join with various misperceptions of the profession and they have limited awareness of the different opportunities in nursing. Without any intervention to correct the misperceptions, the students' attitude towards their chosen nursing course remains questionable and this can affect their performance in school and the quality of nurses they make after school. Orientation programs have been proven to clear misperceptions and promote a positive attitude towards nursing, but their effect has not been studied in Uganda. The purpose of this study was therefore, to determine how an orientation activity affects the perception and attitude of first year nursing students towards the Nursing profession.

Method: It was a descriptive quantitative study with a pre-post interventional design (quasi experimental). It was carried out in four universities in central Uganda and 64 students participated. Pre-test data was collected, followed by a one-hour orientation presentation about nursing professionalism, roles and specialties among others in each institution. Then, Post- data was collected two weeks later using self-administered questionnaires. Data was analyzed using stata version 16, and descriptive statistics included: mean, standard deviation, and frequencies. The relationship between variables was examined using a paired T-test with a P value of < 0.05 to measure significance.

Results: Students had favorable perceptions in some aspects before the presentation, for example like; the need of knowledge and skills to practice($M=2.1$, $SD=.9$), professional autonomy($M=2.1$, $SD=.9$), gender($M=2.1$, $SD=.9$), nurses' contribution to research($M=2.1$,

SD=.9), etc. However, their ideas about nursing were found to be limited and unfavorable in some other aspects before the presentation for example on: nurses pay (M=2.1, SD=.9), marriage (M=2.8, SD=.9), advanced roles (M=2.9, SD= .8), males make good nurses (M=3, SD=.9).

Following the presentation, students became more aware of the roles and opportunities in nursing like professionalism, advanced roles, marriage and specialities. Therefore, the presentation had a significant effect on the students perception as shown by the paired T-test ($\Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.033$ & $\Pr(T > t) = 0.016 > 0.05$) at 5% level.

Although some aspects of attitude obtained favorable mean scores, students had an unfavorable score on their comfort in attending to the hygiene needs of others (M=2.7, SD: .9) and this was one of the lowest mean scores before and after the presentation. There was little but no change in their attitude except increment in their intention to remain in nursing following the presentation.

Conclusion: These findings reveal that students have some favorable perception of nursing at the beginning of the course. However, their ideas are limited and unfavorable in some other aspects of nursing. Also, unfavorable attitude towards nursing was noted before and after the presentation in very important profession aspects. An orientation activity can improve students' perceptions and attitude towards nursing, but more effort is needed to change the students' attitude towards caring for the hygiene needs of others. Educators should pick interest in knowing the students' perception at the beginning of their course and create intentional positive professional experiences to correct any misperception and influence students' attitude towards nursing.

Declaration

I,hereby declare that this work is originally mine and there was no intentional plagiarism, nor was it submitted to any other institution before.

Nakawunde Aisa

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28/08/2023

Approval

This study of the effect of an orientation activity on the perception and attitude of first year direct nursing students towards the nursing profession is the students original work that has been prepared and compiled, with my supervision to be submitted for examination.

Sign.

Date

Faculty: Dr. Sebuliba Faith (RN/M, DHT, BNS, MNS, PhD Nursing Ed.)

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my dear Fiancé Isaac and my precious daughter Charisa. Thank you for your continuous encouragement, prayers and all the support. You are my true blessings always.

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I would like to acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Sebuliba Faith. Your guidance and support in this research have been relentless. Surely the completion of this work has been possible because of your continuous support. Thank you very much. I also would like to recognize the support of Mr. Kimera Joseph in the analysis of the research data. I highly appreciate your selfless support rendered to me in this research journey. May God reward your sacrifice.

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List of Acronyms

ICN	International council of nurses
MOH	Ministry of Health
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United states of America
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter One: Introduction

Without an adequate supply of properly qualified nurses, equitable access to essential high-quality healthcare services cannot be provided (Shamian & Pozun, 2015). This is due to the fact that nurses make up the majority of the health care workforce globally and fill essential responsibilities in the provision of healthcare services (WHO, 2020). In Uganda, nurses make up to 80% of the health care work force (MOH, 2019). However, public misperceptions about the nursing profession and nurses' tasks exist worldwide and Uganda is not an exception. As a result, new nursing students have a variety of misperceptions about the field, including a lack of knowledge about the prospects and professional roles available. These false impressions are the result of misinformation spread by the media, relatives, close friends, and the general public (Cukljek, Juresa, Bile, & Rezek, 2017).

Although these students choose nursing despite the misperceptions, their choice has been linked by a number of studies to more pragmatic than altruistic reasons (Kim & Kim, 2014; Andrade, 2012). Without any intervention, students' perception of nursing will be left to what they have heard from family, friends, media, movies and how nurses are portrayed on television, not to mention the many negative stereotypes in the community at large (Raymond, James, Jacob, & Lyons, 2018). Therefore, the students' attitude towards nursing as a profession becomes questionable which could affect their performance during the training and the quality of nurses they make after the training (Midilli, & Durgun, 2017).

In some countries like USA, UK, among others, orientations programs have been designed which introduce students to nursing earlier (Edmonds, 2013; Potts & Gaulrapp, 2013). These programs according to Edmonds provide more information on nursing, motivate, promote

familiarity clearing misperceptions, connect students with others, promote confidence and a good attitude towards nursing. However, there is barely any accessible information on the orientation that is done in the nursing training institutions in Uganda. This study was therefore to determine the effect of an orientation activity on the perception and attitude of first year direct bachelors nursing students towards the nursing profession in Uganda.

Background

For any profession, having a favorable opinion and attitude is essential in choice making, having competency and sustaining a productive work life (Yilmaz, Sen& Demirkaya, 2014). In a profession, attitude is just as significant as the tangible rewards, status and perception (Andrade, 2012). A big percentage (59%) of the health care workforce worldwide is comprised of nurses (WHO, 2020). In Uganda, the nursing workforce comprises 80% of the health care team (MOH, 2019). It's important to note that; there are numerous roles that nurses play and these are indispensable. They include promoting good health, preventing disease, and providing care for the sick, disabled, and dying. In addition, nurses play a variety of functions, including those in education, health system administration, promoting a safe environment, and advocating for patients. (ICN, 2015).

The nurses' roles however, are not well known to the public nor are they well portrayed in media hence they are not obvious to the new and potential nursing students (Raymond, James, Jacob, & Lyons, 2018; Marcinowicz, Owlasiuk, Slusarska, Zarzycka, & Pawlikowska, 2016). The nurse image rather faces misinformation from the society and media. Some of the sources do not portray nursing with a positive image for example; being an autonomous profession and participating in patients' advocacy, etc. (Çelik, Pasinlioglu, Kocabeyoglu, Çetin, 2013). The

nurse image rather faces different misinformation from the society and media, viewing nurses to have limited responsibilities like checking vital signs, and administering medication as well maintaining patient's hygiene (Sis Çelik et al., 2013). Also, nurses portrayed as rough to clients, doctors' helpers and non-autonomous (Fedele, 2019). The nurse is not portrayed as one who is knowledgeable and confident in what he or she does. It is noteworthy that nursing has been consistently described as women's work and men who are nurses stereotyped as homosexuals and inferior (Jamieson, Harding, Withington, & Hudson, 2019). In some communities in Qatar, nursing is viewed by the public as a dirty, dishonorable job, suitable only for foreigners; that being a nurse puts females at risk of being unmarriageable hence portraying nursing as a low status profession (Hassan, Hassan & King, 2012).

Hence, students from high school harbor various perceptions about the nursing profession yet not all are correct (Potts & Gaulrapp, 2013). Furthermore, the students have limited awareness on the available employment opportunities and specialties in nursing (Yilmaz, Ilce, Cicek, Yuzden, & Yigit, 2016). This might be the case since many students never have the opportunity to obtain career counseling. Only a small percentage of people obtain this advice; instead, they typically acquire it from their family, tutoring centers, acquaintances, and neighbors in their immediate area who have little knowledge of the nursing profession (Server & Bregar, 2014).

Regarding career choice, some are genuinely interested in the profession because of their desire to care for the sick (Yilmaz, Sabancıogulları, & Kumsa, 2016). However, others choose to enter the profession for other reasons such as; family tradition and recommendation, the desire to go abroad, better paying jobs, failure to get into another course, pure chance, by accident, and low admission requirements compared to other medical courses (Marcinowicz, et al., 2016;

Seren, et al., 2017). Therefore, a number of students are not satisfied with the nursing course they have chosen but study it anyway (Işık, Kanbay & Aslan, 2015).

Orientation programs at the beginning of the course are some of the strategies that have been shown to help students think positively about nursing (Yilmaz, et al., 2016; Mennenga, & Tschetter, 2013). Students who have been oriented tend to be more motivated to study nursing compared to those who have not been oriented (Pramila, 2016). These Orientation programs vary from one university or school to another. In an event done in Turkey, with presentations on planning of career and nursing practice possibilities was done, the students got a clearer understanding of what nursing involves and they become more aware on how to align in their future specialties (Yilmaz, et al., 2016).

Also, at Curtin University western Austria, an orientation event with various professionals was shown to make students feel supported and connected with each other hence gaining a professional belonging (Burkhardt, Gower, Flavell, & Taplin, 2015). In addition, a summer institute in the USA that was conducted for 5 days to orient students from high school about nursing, helped them to appreciate nursing in different aspects and their likeness to pursuing nursing increased as shown by the posttest (Potts & Gaulrapp, 2013). When students understand nursing, its roles and available opportunities, their attitude towards the chosen career can possibly become more positive, they can perform better in their education and are likely to offer quality care after qualification.

In Uganda, orientation is done in the nursing schools and Universities in the first week when the students have already registered for the nursing course. This usually involves a tour around the school. Also, teachers, invited people of interest like nursing council representatives, clinical mentors and administrators talk to the students. However, no documentation has been

accessed on this orientation and its impact on students' perception and attitude towards the chosen nursing profession. It is also noteworthy that nurses are not involved in career orientation activities in secondary school where the potential students come from which would be a likely ground for clearing misperceptions.

If students are not oriented, the wrong perception about the course and lack of awareness of the professional roles, practice and career advancement opportunities could affect their attitude towards the nursing course they have chosen. This in the end could affect their performance in school and the quality of nurses they make after training. As evidenced in other countries (Yilmaz, et al., 2016), an orientation activity that clears misperceptions through highlighting nursing roles, opportunities and specialties could bring about better students' attitude toward the nursing course they have chosen to study. This could possibly promote students' performance during the course and hence better nurses. In Uganda, there is no study that has been done in line with these orientation programs. Therefore, in this study, an orientation in form of a presentation on nursing as a profession, roles, opportunities and specialties, challenges and strategies, was done and through collection of pre-data and post-data, the effect of this presentation on first year students' perception and attitude towards nursing was determined.

Statement of the Problem

A big percentage (59%) of the health care workforce worldwide is comprised of nurses who play irreplaceable roles in the delivery of health services. In Uganda, nurses make up to 80% of the health care team. The nurses' roles however are not well known to the public nor are they well portrayed in media hence they are not obvious to those students who have chosen or are thinking of joining nursing.

In addition, many of these students join the course with various misperceptions of the nursing profession which are based on media portrays, parental and friends' views, television and community stereotypes. Nurses are perceived to have limited responsibilities like checking vital signs, and administering medication as well maintaining patient's hygiene. Also, nurses are portrayed as rough to clients, doctors' helpers and non-autonomous. The nurse is not portrayed as one who is knowledgeable and confident in what he or she does. It is noteworthy that nursing has been consistently described as women's work and men who are nurses stereotyped as homosexuals and inferior. In some communities in Qatar, nursing is viewed by the public as a dirty, dishonorable job, suitable only for foreigners; that being a nurse puts females at risk of being unmarriageable hence portraying nursing as a low status profession.

Furthermore, majority of these students have no full awareness of what nursing involves in terms of nature of work, practice and specialization opportunities. Although these students choose nursing despite the misperceptions, their choice has been linked by a number of studies to more pragmatic than altruistic reasons. Due to these misperceptions, students' attitude toward the chosen nursing profession can be negatively affected if nothing is done to correct them.

Having a poor attitude towards the profession can affect students' performance, commitment to the course and hence quality of nurses they will make after qualifying. Orientation programs to nursing are some of the various strategies that have been shown to help students think positively about nursing. Although these programs have shown effectiveness in other places, there is no study that has been done to measure their impact in Ugandan institutions. Central Uganda has various universities and some are within the capital city hence students from different regions converge in this region to study. Doing this study in central Uganda can possibly have different regions represented. This study therefore aimed at

determining the effect of an orientation activity on the perception and attitude of first year bachelors nursing students towards the nursing profession.

Research Question

What effect will an orientation activity have on how first year bachelor's students view nursing roles, professionalism, specialties and their attitude towards studying nursing?

Study Purpose

To determine which changes could happen in the way first year direct bachelors nursing students view nursing roles, professionalism, specialties, and their attitude towards studying nursing after an orientation activity.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the students' perception of the nursing profession before and after the orientation activity
2. To determine students' attitude towards the nursing profession before and after the orientation activity
3. To describe the effect of an orientation activity on the students' perceptions and attitude toward the nursing profession.

Significance of the Problem to Nursing

To Students

The findings of this study will highlight the need for orientation activities at the beginning of the course which will help students to understand more about the nursing profession for example; what is involved in the nursing course, roles and specialties hence their interest in the course is likely to improve, they can make well informed decisions in line with performance goals, career growth and specialization goals.

To Teachers.

The study findings could give a clear picture of what majority of students think of nursing as well as their misperceptions at the beginning of the course before orientation. Teachers could be more intentional when planning orientation activities and support students with ease reinforcing positive information during orientation.

To the Policy Makers.

The findings could guide in devising better enrolment strategies into nursing. For example, Ministry of Education and Sports can organise orientation activities early enough for the potential nursing students who are still in high school. In these career building activities, nurses should be made part of the facilitators to offer the technical guidance and answer students' questions and concerns appropriately. This can help the profession to have more interested learners and hence high-quality professionals.

The study findings however may be limited in application since the orientation activity was only for one hour which may not have been adequate enough to address all the possible concerns

and student questions. The limited orientation time might have affected the outcomes of the attitude of students following the presentation because no significant change was noted. Educators should therefore organize orientation activities with more time allocated to possibly create more impact. Also, the close ended questions did not give students a chance to give the in-depth responses on their perception. Hence a mixed method approach could be used to get more detailed responses on perception before and after the orientation of these new students.

Theoretical Framework: Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown &Hackett, 2002)

The three variables that make up this theory are self-efficacy beliefs, result expectancies, and individual aspirations. The foundational elements of Social Cognitive Career Theory are these. Self-efficacy, according to Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2002), is a person's personal opinion of his or her capacity to carry out specific behaviors or courses of action. Beliefs on the results or consequences of carrying out specific acts are referred to as outcome expectancies. Personal goals can be outlined as one's intentions to engage in a specific activity (such as pursuing a specific academic major) or to perform at a particular level (such as receiving an A in a specific course).

According to the social cognitive career theory, objectives are closely related to both self-efficacy and outcome expectancies. According to Lenten, Brown, and Hackett (2002), people typically set goals that are congruent with their perceptions of their own talents and the results they anticipate obtaining from engaging in a certain course of action (e.g., to earn an A in a particular course).

Self-efficacy results from successful personal performance, vicarious experiences such witnessing others who share similar traits, social influence, and psychological and emotional

states. Beliefs about the results or repercussions of engaging in a specific behaviour are known as outcome expectations. According to the social cognitive career theory, people are more likely to pursue an activity if they believe it will result in favourable outcomes they value, such as social and self-approval, material incentives, and desirable working conditions (Lent, Brown, and Hackett, 2002).

Their self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations both play a role in how engaged they are in activities, how much effort and perseverance they put in, and how successful they ultimately are. Albert Bandura's general social cognitive theory, an influential theory of cognitive and motivational processes that has been extended to the study of many areas of psychosocial functioning, such as academic performance, health behavior, and organizational development, is the foundation for the social cognitive career theory, which was developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett in 1994.

According to the social cognitive career theory, people establish their career aspirations in a sociocultural setting that is shaped by the opportunity structure, which includes educational opportunities, socioeconomic status, and social supports (Lent & Brown, 1996). In central Uganda, students who join nursing come from different backgrounds and possibly have different ideas of what an ideal career to them would be. However, educational grades, social economic states of these students and the families can dictate their being in nursing. Some for example rely on government sponsorship and do not have personal resources to pursue whichever career they could have desired.

According to Santos (2018), a leading theory on career perspective called social cognitive career theory examines how people identify their career interests, make goals, and stay in the workforce. By connecting the constructs of interests, personal goals, and outcome expectations

with the concepts of students' perception and attitude toward nursing, which are to be determined in this study, the theory will serve as a framework for this study and will guide in the discussion of study findings.

Figure I: Social Cognitive Career Theory in Relation to Students' Perception and Attitude



Note. This is an adapted version of the social cognitive career theory. It was adapted with permission. In adopting, an orientation activity was included replacing learning experiences, with the intended outcomes of perception and attitude as they replaced performance domain and attainments. The details on personal inputs and background environmental influences were excluded in this study since they were not directly linked to the research objectives.

Perception is defined as the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted (Oxford dictionary). In this study, students' perception is defined as the way the nursing profession is regarded, understood and interpreted by the nursing students. What is or is not involved in the profession. Having wrong perception of the nursing profession can affect the self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations of students (Fillman, 2015). The nursing profession could be underrated and students could end up setting smaller personal goals. In addition, even after entering nursing, students may think of other professions as being more superior to nursing because their wrong perceptions cause them to have compromised outcome expectations in nursing.

People are most likely to become interested in activities where they feel both efficacious (skilled at doing) and from which they anticipate favorable (valued) outcomes. This is in accordance with the Social Cognitive Career Theory on Interests. A person may be prevented by environment and cultural factors from picking a career in which they are interested due of group decision-making and instead choose for a vocation that is preferred by the family. Goals for maintaining or expanding involvement will evolve as interest increases (Lent, Brown, and Hackett, 2002).

Many teenagers and adults find it difficult to follow their passions while choosing a career because of barriers including finances, family pressure, educational restrictions, or a lack of support from significant others. They compromise their interests and make decisions based on pragmatic concerns, such as the type of work that is compatible with their self-efficacy beliefs and result expectations, such as the likelihood of getting a well-paying job (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Similarly nursing students choose this profession due to reasons related to Job

availability but when they are not actually satisfied with the choice they have made because they had no interest initially (Elibol, Kader & Harmanci, 2017). This is a common occurrence in Uganda as a country since the number of youths who are unemployed are many and parents encourage their children to pursue courses where employment opportunities are favorable like nursing.

In a study done in China, supporting students socially was found to be helpful in influencing students' interests and performance goals (Jiang & Zhang, 2012). Performance goals involve both ability and motivation. Having a higher self-efficacy and expecting great results can make students to perform better, be more organized in the work, and exhibit higher states of resilience in case of challenges (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2002).

Orientation in this study encompassed highlighting (presentation) of the actual diverse roles and tasks of a nurse, different opportunities and specialization in nursing, values of nursing, social images of nursing, professional uniqueness of nurses, and their performance. Students who are not well oriented about nursing are likely to have a wrong outcome expectation, less interest and may set lower performance goals. This could also possibly bring about poor attitude, feeling inferior, low self-esteem even after joining the course of nursing, low motivation and poor performance (Sever & Bregar, 2015).

Nurse educators are responsible for mentoring students and showing them good examples in their behavior. With continued intentional support, the interest of students in nursing will be increased as they study (Fillman, 2015). Students' who are interested in nursing tend to exhibit a positive attitude towards their course (Midilli, & Durgun, 2017).

In this study, the first-year students were supported through an orientation presentation with an aim of influencing their perception and attitude towards their chosen profession. social support can help students who struggle academically. This can be done through grouping them, offering different trainings which can help them to cope with challenge in their performance and others. (Dutta, et al., 2015).

The choices that students make were found to be related to what they have learned, what they expect to get out of their pursuits, and what they are interested in. These agree with the social-cognitive career theory (Gonzalez, 2012). Gonzalez further stated that; it's important for teachers and counsellor to help students to expect better outcomes. She adds that without role models and encouragement messages, students might not use their potential to maximum. The current study is therefore, hinged on orientation as a way of passing on messages to first-year students to aid them in proper alignment with the chosen nursing career by informing their perception and attitude.

Definition of Variables and Key Terms

Perception; This is defined by the images that students have of the nursing profession. Their awareness of what is or is not involved in the profession (Oxford languages).

Attitude; Attitude is defined as a settled way of thinking or feeling about something (oxford languages). In this study, it means how students feel about nursing; whether they are proud (satisfied) of being nursing students or not.

Orientation; This encompasses highlighting(presentation) of the actual, diverse roles and tasks of a nurse, different opportunities and specialization in nursing, values of nursing, social stereotypes of nursing, professionalism of nurses, and performance of nurses.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

This chapter consists of literature review on; nursing roles and opportunities(specialties), Perception and reasons for choice of nursing, students' attitude towards nursing, and students' orientation programs to nursing.

Nurses Make the Biggest Percentage of the Health Workforce and Play irreplaceable Roles in Health care

There are numerous and essential tasks for nurses in the medical field. These include caring for the sick, the disabled, and the dying. They also encompass the promotion of health and the prevention of illness. In addition, nurses do a variety of duties, including promoting a safe workplace, managing the health system, developing policies, and teaching (ICN, 2015).

Nursing has advanced to even more advanced specialties, such as nurse anesthetist, nurse-midwife, nurse practitioner, and clinical nurse specialist, urology nurse (Texas board of nursing, 2017). This is due to a rise in the demand for nurses as well as changes in patient type and acuity. Additionally, among the nursing specialties that call for particular knowledge and abilities are nursing administration, education, public health, informatics, and research. Through improved patient outcomes and the advancement of nursing science, nurses who work in these positions make substantial contributions to knowledge and competence in important nursing practice areas (Texas board of nursing, 2017).

A study conducted by a team from Austria in 24 countries across the different regions in low income, lower-middle income countries revealed over 70 identified Advanced Nursing Practice and Advanced Practice Nursing roles (Scanlon, Murphy, Smolowitz & Lewis, 2023). These different nursing roles have been implemented to address service gaps and highlight disparities in education, practice, and regulation compared to international guidelines. In some of these countries, especially the low- income, the different roles were created mainly to meet the needs of the underserved population and also due to physicians' shortage. Examples of these roles were: Clinical nurse specialists, Nurse practitioner, Advanced practice nurse, Community Nurse, Nurse Anesthetist, Nurse Midwife, Nursing Officer, Orientator, Public Health Nurse among others. This study reveals more on how nurses are truly cardinal in the health care system globally.

In Uganda, nurses make up to 80% of the health care workforce (MOH, 2019). The Ministry of Public Service Uganda (2017) states that the main responsibilities of nursing and midwifery in Uganda include advocacy, disease prevention, health promotion, health education, counseling, therapeutic care, co-ordination and collaboration, research, and administration. However, Uganda lacks some advanced roles like clinical nurse specialists and nurse practitioners. All the above roles are indispensable in the health care sector hence should be highlighted to the public and potential students.

Despite the many roles that nurses already have, on a number of occasions nurses also end up performing tasks that are not in their job description (Hammad et al., 2021). In a study by Ayasreh, Hayajneh & Al Awamleh (2022) in Jordan, 47% of the students who participated reported witnessing nurses performing non-nursing tasks. Examples of these extra tasks were: clerical tasks, delivering or retrieving food trays, transferring stable patients, supply and order

management, cleaning clients' rooms and answering phone calls. This increases the burden of work on a nurse yet usually some of these tasks go unrecognized.

Nurses can take up any role to save life. A study done in Uganda revealed that nurses are cardinal in the management of HIV including initiating patients on ART. They have been found to be more dependable as they tend to stay for a longer time in a place compared to the young doctors who commonly leave for further training and better paying jobs (Zakumumpa, 2020). Zakumumpa further states that nurses are empowered to do more than one task in HIV care, from testing to ensuring viral suppression. With regular training, their performance would be unlimited since studies have revealed that nurse-managed HIV care and treatment is not inferior. Therefore, its important for such outstanding tasks performed by nurses to be made known publicly so as to reveal the true value of this health care cadre and make the profession admirable to potential students.

However, there is still a need to establish nurses' recognition within the medical team. Despite advancements in professionalizing nursing and creating advanced clinical roles like nurse practitioners, nursing students continue to voice their reasonable concerns about how some other health professionals devalue the role of nurses in patient care. Some of these professionals believe nurses are the lowest in the hierarchy, according to Andrade (2012). This definitely serves as a wake-up call for the nursing community, and the whole health care fraternity who should go to work building nurses' reputations and assisting new students in developing positive attitudes toward nursing as their chosen field of study.

There are Many Misperceptions about Nursing

It has been demonstrated that choosing a profession, becoming competent in a profession, and maintaining a productive work life all depend on having a favorable opinion of and attitude toward a profession (Yilmaz, Sen, & Demirkaya, 2014). In a profession, attitude is just as significant as the tangible rewards, like status and perception (Andrade, 2012).

Many students have mixed perceptions of nursing at the start of the course (Cukljek, Juresa, Bile & Rezek, 2017). This might be the case since many students never have the opportunity to obtain career counseling. Only a small percentage of people obtain this advice; instead, they typically acquire it from their family, tutoring centers, acquaintances, and neighbors in their immediate area who have little knowledge of the nursing profession (Server & Bregar, 2014).

In addition, a study conducted in Saudi Arabia (Elmorshedy, AlAmrani, Hassan, Fayed, & Albrecht, 2020) found that only 68.9% of participants knew that nurses could advance to higher managerial positions, and about one-third of participants were unaware of the title of graduates from nursing collegiate programs. Furthermore, Elmorshedy and colleagues also noted that, Nursing was perceived by 61% of participants to be inferior to medicine and participants also showed ignorance of how long it takes to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing. Some students also didn't fully understand what nursing entails. Many students entered the course with false notions of the nursing profession, according to a study done in Poland (Marcinowicz, et al., 2016).

In addition, nursing is seen as a female-dominated field. More than half of the participants in a survey conducted in Bahrain agreed that nursing is a female-dominated field (Sanad & Awadhalla, 2016). Sanad and Awadhalla also observed that male participants were

more likely than female participants to study nursing for practical reasons, such as the advantages of being guaranteed instant employment, obtaining scholarships, and receiving a good wage. Similar cultural attitudes favoring female nurses were found in a study by Abbas, Zakar, and Fischer (2020). Although it was assumed that women would work in the nursing profession rather than men, there have been some incorrect media portrayals of female nurses as handmaidens of doctors with domestic problems (Abbas, Zakar, & Fischer, 2020). Positive portrayals of nursing in the media are undoubtedly necessary to combat erroneous public perceptions of the profession. In order to encourage a positive attitude toward the profession as they study, it is necessary to guide the students who have chosen to enroll in this field.

Similarly, in another study, nurses were portrayed as rough to clients, doctors' helpers and non-autonomous, not portrayed as one who is knowledgeable and confident in what he or she does (Fedele, 2019). It is noteworthy that nursing has been consistently described as women's work and men who are nurses stereotyped as homosexuals and inferior (Jamieson, Harding, Withington, & Hudson, 2019). In some communities in Qatar, nursing is viewed by the public as a dirty, dishonorable job, suitable only for foreigners; that being a nurse puts females at risk of being unmarriageable hence portraying nursing as a low status profession (Hassan, Hassan & King, 2012). Furthermore, students have limited awareness on the available employment opportunities and specialties in nursing (Potts & Gaulrapp, 2013).

According to previous research, nursing is regarded as a less rewarding profession than other health care fields. In a study conducted in Singapore (Liaw, Wu, Chow, Lim & Tan, 2017), health care students who were not nursing majors indicated their views that nursing was a less rewarding profession, a more physical work, and that nurses were unable to make diagnoses. In this very study, Liaw and Colleagues noted that Nursing was judged to have a higher level of

gender stigma than their own healthcare profession options, and as nurses, they would be less likely to obtain the higher qualifications and career advancements they desired. This demonstrates a lack of knowledge regarding the unique practicing opportunities and professional progression possibilities in nursing.

However, Hoeve, et al. (2016) reported that students who choose nursing as their top academic option were found to have more favorable attitudes toward nursing, particularly the caring orientation. According to Hoeve and colleagues, students who choose nursing as their top option also concur more with the principles of advocacy and empathy. It is important to recognize the role that preconceptions play in undertaking a profession. Teachers have the chance to better educate nursing students for their future careers by understanding how they view and feel about nursing.

Many Students Choose Nursing due to more Pragmatic than Altruistic Reasons

Numerous studies have emphasized the various reasons why students decide to pursue a career in nursing, as seen below;

According to a study done in Poland, students' motivations for choosing the nursing field included a desire to help others, family tradition, a desire to work abroad for higher pay, the inability to enroll in other programs, pure luck, and the nursing field's easier admission standards than those for medical programs (Marcinowicz, et al., 2016).

In addition, a different study done in India, most nursing students saw the field as a lucrative one with a promising future in terms of scope (38%), employment opportunities, job security, decent pay (14%), and as a pathway to study abroad, whereas only 3.8% thought nursing was a noble profession (Andrade, 2012). In addition, a survey carried out in Turkey

revealed that 65.8% of participants had a dream occupation other than nursing, and 46.9% of participants said they selected nursing because it was easier to find employment (Elibol, Kader & Seren, 2017).

Similar to the study mentioned above, a study conducted in Australia (Wilkes, Lesley, Cowin, & Johnson, 2015) revealed similar findings that stability and security in the workplace were very important to students choosing nursing, with benefits including the simplicity of finding employment domestically for 248 and internationally for 346 of the 676 participants. In addition, students at both private and public colleges in Turkey preferred to study nursing due to how simple it was to get employment (Harmanci, Bacaksiz, & Baykal, 2017). This is troubling since the nursing professionals appear to be drifting away from the core values of their profession, which are love and care for others. It may reflect the rising unemployment rates among the younger generation.

In another study done in Indonesia using focus group discussions, one of the main themes that emerged regarding why students selected nursing was the influence of parents and family (Gunawan, Sukarna, Efendi, Aunguroch, & Nazliansyah, 2019). Participants expressed that they initially had no intention to do nursing but they were requested by their parents to pursue a career in nursing which they went ahead to do. The other themes that emerged in this study for choosing nursing were: Conscious to help family and others, inspiration by nurses, desire to improve the nursing image and opportunities to study and work abroad.

Furthermore, Harmanci et al. (2017) found that the majority of nursing students were females (98%) which may be related to the late admittance of males to nursing in Turkey and nursing being viewed as a feminine profession. Nursing was one of the top 3 professions chosen by students at both private and public universities, with teaching as their preferred profession. In

comparison to nursing, teaching offers better working circumstances, compensation, and fewer restrictions on women's duties as mothers. This knowledge necessitates nurse educators to involve these students early and establish the nursing culture of loving and serving, demonstrating to them that nursing requires more than just a career interest but also selfless service to those who come to seek treatment.

Perception can Affect the Attitude and Students' Performance in Nursing

Nursing is a profession that calls for selflessness in delivery of services. To be able to fulfill the professional obligations of nursing, one needs to be proud of the profession. Numerous studies about students' attitude towards the nursing profession have been conducted across the globe. In a study done in Turkey, on attitude towards nursing, students who were female showed more enthusiasm for nursing than students who were male (Midilli, & Durgun, 2017).

Additionally, Midilli and Durgun also noted that students who chose nursing voluntarily and those who were satisfied with the school education system had a more favorable attitude towards nursing. These findings show that it's not only the preconceived ideas about nursing but also the way students perceive the school, how the nursing program is organized and run affects the students' attitude towards nursing.

Furthermore, another study conducted in Turkey found that students who exhibit high levels of altruism tend to have a more positive attitude toward the nursing profession than do students who exhibit low levels of altruism (Gol, 2018). Gol further stated that during nursing education, the adoption of training programs that raise nursing students' altruism levels and attitudes toward the profession would help to strengthen the interaction between the two.

Similarly, another study conducted in Turkey as well, found that motivated students who have a

good view of nursing tend to have higher levels of self-esteem, professional self-concept, and self-motivation (Yilmaz, Sabancoullar, & Kumsa, 2016). However, Elibol & Seren (2017) noticed in their study that some students chose the field by accident and wanted to quit right away because they felt ashamed to study nursing, which they view as the lowest of all occupations and one that is undervalued. This negative occurrence could be common; hence educators need to support such students so that they can adapt and appreciate the value of their profession.

It's also critical to keep in mind that nursing students' attitudes can shift over the course of their education, going from positive in the first year to negative as the years pass (Pareek, Batra, Kalia, & Sethi, 2015). However, Hoeve, Castelein, Jansen, Jansen, & Roodbol (2017) found that despite the difficulties they faced, students' intense desire to become nurses served as a significant motivation to continue in the course, indicating that the advantages of a nursing career can outweigh the drawbacks.

Orientation Programs Can Bring About Positive Thoughts towards the Nursing Profession

Orientation programs involve activities held to sensitize students about nursing and what it involves. These Orientation programs vary from one university or school to another.

In a study conducted in Turkey to investigate the effect of a career-planning event for nursing students on conceptualization of the nursing profession and their career plan, participants' perceptions of their professional status and quality significantly improved in the post-test (Yilmaz et al., 2016). The participants' knowledge about career planning, having career plans, the desire to participate in nursing research, assurance of employment, and desire to specialize in nursing improved significantly. Also, 40% of the participants wanted to specialize

in nursing with 23% in academics and 16.2% in administration. Hence students became more focused following this event.

Additionally, at Curtin University in western Austria, sessions on promoting nursing identity, highlighting leadership opportunities, and showcasing employer pathways were part of an orientation event that included nursing students, academic and student support staff, and representatives from the health industry. According to the new nursing students, these sessions encouraged support and allowed them to interact and form bonds with other students (Burkhardt, Gower, Flavell, & Taplin, 2015). It's clear that this event helped students to fit and not to feel inferior which can boost their self-esteem and possibly promote better performance.

Additionally, Potts and Gaulrapp (2013) held a summer institute in the USA for 5 days to orient high school students and help them make informed decisions about pursuing nursing. This summer institute was packed with lectures, service projects, tours, and other activities in addition to teaching and using nursing skills. Following these exercises, the students said that they had learned about the numerous nursing opportunities available to them, diverse nursing abilities, and that their desire to pursue a career in nursing had grown. This shows how important it is to have students oriented early enough about nursing to inform and help them to verify their interests in this profession.

Additionally, Sever and Bregar (2014) found that students who participated in orientation activities were more receptive to pursuing nursing-related career specialized studies. Numerous students never have the opportunity to obtain career counseling. The small number of students who obtain this counseling acquire it via their families, tutoring centers, friends, and immediate area.

In Ugandan institutions, orientation is majorly a week of touring the school, registration and getting acquainted with the new study environment. In this week special activities could be designed to put more light on what nursing is, roles and opportunities so as to clear the misperceptions that students join with and possibly promote a positive attitude towards the nursing profession at the beginning of the program. The current study intended to introduce an orientation activity and see the difference it would make in the students' perception and attitude towards nursing since nothing has been document about this so far in Uganda.

Summary of Chapter Two

Studies reveal that nurses play outstanding roles in the health sector both locally and globally. These roles range from the commonly known basic to more advanced ones. Some new roles have been created in the nursing fraternity to meet the needs of the population and cover shortage of doctors especially in the low income and lower-middle income countries. Also, nurses are seen to perform tasks that are not in their job description. They have demonstrated a high level of commitment to work and dependability due to their persistence. A clear example is seen in the management of HIV patients in Uganda where nursing led management has proven not to be inferior and yet more reliable.

However, neither the general public nor the students who choose to study nursing are familiar with these roles and prospects. Instead, studies have revealed gaps in the students' perceptions on nursing for example; lack of professional autonomy, gender bias, less rewarding, lowest in hierarchy, no opportunities for profession growth among others. These misperceptions need to be addressed with appropriate interventions to possibly promote the students' love for the nursing profession.

In addition, students' reasons for choosing nursing have been revealed to vary a lot and some of the reasons are not directly linked to the principles of the nursing profession of loving and caring. Students who chose nursing willingly and on their own were revealed to have more positive attitudes towards nursing. Moreover, the bulk of motivations for selecting nursing were more utilitarian than altruistic. This is troubling since the nursing professionals appear to be drifting away from the core values of their profession, which are love and care for others. It may reflect the rising unemployment rates among the younger generation.

By shedding more light on the roles, opportunities, and specialties in nursing, orientation programs that have been implemented in some regions have been effective in eradicating students' misconceptions about nursing and in encouraging a more positive attitude toward the course. Although new students are orientated by nursing institutions in Uganda, there is no information or documentation available regarding the pre- and post-orientation states of students' perception and attitude toward nursing. Analysis of this literature leaves a gap of finding out how an orientation activity affects students' perception and their attitude towards nursing in Uganda hence the reason why the current study was conducted. Chapter three will look at the methodology of this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology of the study will be described in details. This will include; method and design, study setting, study population, sample and sampling technique, data collection and measurement techniques. In addition, the description of the data collection instrument, item analysis, study intervention, data analysis, and rights of the subjects will as well be included.

Research Method and Design

This study employed a descriptive, quantitative approach with a pre-post interventional (quasi experimental) design. Using quantitative method was considered because it was to help the researcher to measure the magnitude of the problem under study and where possible make inferences. Students' perception and attitude were assessed before and after the one-hour orientation presentation and the findings were described in relation to how the orientation affected the students' perception and attitude. Therefore, the pre-post design was used to collect both pre-orientation and post-orientation data for comparison.

Study Setting

The study was carried out in four universities in central Uganda that have students undertaking a nursing course at a direct bachelor's level. Of the four universities, 3 were private and only one was government. This was because there is only one government university in central Uganda that offers a nursing course at a bachelor's level. The students' complete high school and join these higher institutions to study nursing as their major. Therefore, it was easy to access these first-year nursing students at their study environment with the help of their faculty

in mobilization. It was also easy to get a venue for orienting these students by using the university buildings which can be a classroom or school hall hence making the environment favorable for data collection. Five universities had given a positive verbal response to support data collection from their students. However, data was collected from only four since one of them never had first year direct nursing students in session during the time of data collection. The other four universities supported the researcher when the research ethics committee had approved the proposal and cleared the researcher to go ahead and collect data. After receiving the letter of approval from the research ethics committee, the researcher submitted the same proposal to these institutions along with the approval letter and then they gave authorization to the researcher to begin data collection.

Study Population

The target population were the students that had enrolled in the university undertaking a bachelor in nursing science direct from high school in their first year of study. The accessible students were those who were undertaking a bachelor's degree in nursing in their first year in the identified institutions in central Uganda. These were found at their respective institutions. Convenience sampling was used to select the participating institutions and access all students that were available and willing to participate in the study. The first-year nursing students were chosen because they are the newest in the course and there is need to determine their perceptions, and attitude towards nursing at the early stages of the course. Convenience sampling was used to access all readily available participants. Only institutions with direct entry bachelors nursing students were selected. The student numbers were estimated to be 8, 18, 25, 25, and 30 in the five institutions giving an average of 21 which was used in calculation of the sample size.

Sampling

Sample Size.

Using Cochran's formula,

$$\text{Sample size, } n = \frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{\varepsilon^2}$$

Where z is the z-score = 1.96 at 95% confidence interval.

ε is the margin of error = 0.05?

p Proportion of a bachelor's nursing students is estimated at 0.5

$$p = 384$$

And modifying it with the equation of small population estimation

$$\text{Sample size } n = \frac{n_o}{1 + \frac{(n_o - 1)}{N}}$$

Where $N=105$ representing the number of students in the five selected institutions following the calculated average number from 8, 18, 25, 25 and 30, to be 21. Multiplying 21 by 5 gives us the 105.

n_o = Sample size from Cochran's formula

Thus;

$$n = \frac{384}{1 + \frac{(384-1)}{105}}$$

$$n = 83$$

Sampling Technique.

In this study, participants were selected through convenience sampling. After identifying the institutions where the study was going to be done, all the direct entry first-year bachelors nursing students that were available at the university were allowed to participate in the study, except those who did not consent for the study. Using convenience sampling was based on the number of students pursuing nursing as direct entrants from high school. According the records of different universities consulted, the students number ranged from 08 to 30 for majority of the institutions. Therefore, to access a representative sample, all those who were available and willing to participate were enrolled in the study.

Inclusion Criteria.

The nursing students that were enrolled in this study, were in first year, direct entrants from high school and had consented to participate in the study. These nursing students were chosen because they were in the first year of the course and therefore, their perceptions and attitudes were being examined in this study at the beginning of the nursing course. The inclusion criterion was guided by literature, where new students were highlighted to have a number of misperceptions towards the nursing profession, as well as mixed attitude (Marcinowicz, et al., 2016).

Exclusion Criteria.

Students who were undertaking a direct bachelor in nursing course, who were meant to be in second year or another year ahead but retaking a course in first year. Although, they consent to be in this study, they were excluded. In addition, students who were not direct from

high school but already had a diploma in nursing were excluded. Also, participants who were not able to offer an hour to attend the orientation session were excluded from the study.

Description of the Orientation Activity

The intervention in this study was an orientation activity to the nursing profession. In this orientation, a one-hour presentation was done by the principal investigator to the first-year nursing students. This presentation was done immediately after the study participants finished filling in the pre-test questionnaires. In this presentation, the main objectives were to help students understand nursing as a profession, the roles of a professional nurse, opportunities or specialties in nursing and also collaborative relationship between nurses and other health care professionals. Also, the challenges nurses face and strategies that can be used to overcome these challenges were presented. The main aids were the PowerPoint slides and handouts with notes on the presentation. The presentation and handouts were originally prepared by the principal investigator using information collected from appropriate resources. During the presentation, participants were given an opportunity to participate actively through brainstorming, and question and answer sessions. Each participant received a handout at the end of the presentation to familiarize themselves more with the content. The study participants also had access to the contact of the researcher and some continued asking questions even after the presentation was done for more clarity and guidance.

Variables

There are 3 variables in this study. The independent variable was the orientation activity to nursing and the dependent variables were students' perception of the nursing profession and

students' attitude towards the nursing profession. The dependent variables were measured before and after the orientation presentation to see the effect of this intervention on these variables.

Data Collection and Measurement Techniques

Permission was sought first from the research ethical committee of Uganda Christian university, by submitting the research proposal and the data collection tools to the committee. Who went through these documents and gave an approval letter. Thereafter, the researcher visited the selected institutions and submitted a copy of the proposal and the data collection tools, UCU REC approval letter and introductory letter requesting for permission to interact with the students and collect data. A written letter was given to the researcher from each of the research offices of these institutions to allow her access to the students and collect data. The faculty from the host institutions helped in mobilizing students. A quiet room was used to minimize distractions, with proper sitting arrangement to help students not to copy responses from each other, while keeping social distance.

The researcher met the study participants in one room for each institution, which was set aside for that day. The researcher explained the study process and called upon participants for voluntary participation. Those who agreed to participate were given consent forms to fill in and any declination to participation was allowed without any malice. Each participant who consented to participate was assigned a study number to write on the questionnaire to help in correlating the pre- orientation data to post- orientation data. Pre-orientation data was collected using self-administered pre-test questionnaires before the orientation session.

Following collection of pre-orientation data, the prepared presentation was done. Participants were also given handouts with orientation material. Post- orientation data was then

collected after two weeks using self-administered post-test questionnaires. The participants had been informed about the plan to collect data after the two weeks and hence they had to memorize the study codes. The participants were requested to indicated the same code they used on the pre-test questionnaire on top of the post-test questionnaire to enable comparison.

For purposes of confidentiality, the questionnaires were anonymous and participants used a number assigned as a code by the researcher but not their names. All participants were requested to check their questionnaires for completeness before they were collected by the researcher and any missing information was completed by the participants. The collected data was stored in a place only accessible to the researcher.

Description of the Data Collection Tool.

The researcher used a newly developed tool, which was a self- administered questionnaire with 3 sections. Section 1 had 13 items on social background and demographic characteristics which included; age, gender, nationality, sponsor, and institution and semester of study, source of information about nursing, order of preference of nursing, family influence on career choice and reasons for choosing nursing. Section 2 included 20 items that were for determining the students' perception of the nursing profession. These were on a 4-point Likert scale with a highest total score of 80 and a lowest total score of 20. Lastly, section 3 included 10 items for determining the students' attitude towards the nursing profession. These items were also on a 4-point Likert scale with a highest total score of 40 and a lowest total score of 10. The scores of the participants were obtained before and after the orientation presentation, and the percentage change and mean differences in scores were calculated.

Validity.

In this study, content validity was assessed. The content of the measurement tool was guided by the objectives of the study. This instrument was validated through a review by a panel of experts in the nursing profession and other experts in research committee before data collection.

Reliability.

The Reliability for the instrument in this study was checked through a pilot test with a sample of 14 students. All participants in the pilot test answered the questions well and they indicated that they were clear. Also, the reliability of the instrument was further checked using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) where Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was obtained to be 0.86. Hence, the value 0.86 indicated a high level of reliability for the tool that was used in this study.

Item Analysis for the Pre-test Questionnaire

The content in this questionnaire was guided by the study objectives and the reviewed literature as well as the social cognitive career theory. The first Section consisted of 13 questions regarding social background and demographic characteristics of participants (age, sex: nationality, sponsor, training institution; semester of study), career choice (how one learned about nursing, preference order of nursing; order of career choice, influence of family/friend in career choice, having a nurse in the family, choosing nursing by self, reason for choosing nursing).

The second section was to measure the students' perception of the nursing profession and it had 20 items that ranged from question 1 to 20. These were assessing how the participants look

at nursing as a noble profession, autonomy, roles, training requirements, gender stereotypes, collaboration with other professions, practice and career advancement opportunities. The responses were measured on a 4-point Likert scale of 1-4, with 1- representing strongly disagree and 4-strongly agree. The scores were reversed for the negative questions to obtain the highest positive response from each participant. The highest score in this section was 80 and the lowest was 20. The higher scores were a reflection a more favorable perception and a lower score would indicate unfavorable perception for the participant.

The overall scores were then be computed in percentages as follows; $\frac{\text{Actual score}}{\text{Total score}} \times 100$.

The mean score was used to determine the items the participants most-agreed with and those they most disagreed with. The items which registered a significant change after the presentation were also noted. The effect of the orientation program on the perception of the nursing profession was then assessed based on the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test results.

Lastly, section 3, was for assessing students' attitude towards the nursing profession. It had 10 items that ranged from 1 to 10. These were assessing satisfaction with the choice made to study nursing, desire to change to another profession given chance, whether one would recommend nursing to a friend, plan to specialize in nursing, considering nursing can fulfill their career dreams, attending to hygiene needs of others, feeling comfortable to talk about nursing with other peers, have an identified area of specialization, intentions to work hard to be one of the best nurses. These items were on a 4-point Likert scale with 1- being strongly disagree and 4- being strongly agree. The highest score in this section was therefore to be 40 and the lowest was

to be 10. The scores for the negative questions were reversed to obtain the highest positive score of a participant.

The higher scores would indicate a more positive attitude and the lower scores would indicate a more negative attitude. The overall score for each participant was then computed in percentages as follows; $\frac{\text{Actual score}}{\text{Total score}} \times 100$. The mean scores were used to determine the items that participants most agreed with and those they most disagreed with. The items that registered a significant change in the mean following the presentation were also noted. The effect of the orientation program on the attitude towards the nursing profession was then assessed using the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test results.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Data was entered in stata version 16. All questionnaire items were complete and had no missing data. The responses on the second and third section were on a 4-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” ranging from 1-4. The scoring was reversed for negative statements so that the sum of score in each section indicates higher positive agreement. Section 2, had 20 items and the highest score was 80 and the lowest was 20. The mean scores were calculated for every item to determine the items which the participants most agreed with and those they most disagreed with. The items that registered a change following the presentation were noted.

In section C, there are 10 items on attitude and the highest score was 40 and the lowest was 10. This was done for both pre-test and post- test and the mean difference in scores on perception and attitude was determined. The higher scores for perception (values above the mean) indicated a favorable perception and lower score (Values below the mean) indicated unfavorable perception for each participant. Also, higher scores (Values above the mean) for attitude indicated a positive attitude and lower scores (values below the mean) indicated a negative attitude. The mean scores were calculated for every item to determine the items that participants most agreed with and those they most disagreed with. The items that registered a change following the presentation were noted.

For objectives one and two, univariate analysis was done using descriptive statistics and presentation was done using frequency tables. Descriptive statistics included measures of central tendency (mean(M)) and dispersion (standard deviation (SD)), as well as frequencies(F).

For objective three, bivariate analyzing was done to establish an association between the orientation activity and perceptions/attitudes of nursing students towards the nursing profession.

The significance of the association set at p-value 0.05, corresponding to 95% confidence interval was determined using the paired t- tests. Dependent samples t-tests were performed on the primary data collected about the attitude and perception of nursing students included into the study. The mean differences were obtained for both attitude and perception scores.

Rights of Subject and Ethical Implication

Permission was sought from Uganda Christian University research ethics committee, and the institutions where data collection was done using a written letter. The faculty in the hosting institutions helped in mobilizing the first-year students who participate in the study. The purpose of study was explained to the participants and each participant was given a consent form to fill in before participating in the study. Questionnaires were then distributed to the participants to go through and the researcher was available to guide in anything that wasn't clear.

Risk.

There were no risks. However, the participants had to sacrifice sometime for participating in the study which was a bit an inconvenience. Minimal time was used during the data collection and orientation to limit the inconvenience. The orientation took strictly an hour and the questionnaires were not too long so the participants used 15-20 minutes to fill in these questionnaires.

Potential Benefits.

An orientation presentation on the Nursing Profession, roles of a professional nurse and opportunities in nursing was done as part of this study which highlighted the course they were studying. Participants could end up more focused and perform better during the course. In

addition, participant could find it easy to do career planning after this course, especially choosing areas of specialization in nursing. There were no incentives involved in this study and, there were also no lies.

Ensuring Confidentiality.

For purposes of confidentiality, all questionnaires were kept under lock and key in a place only accessible to the researcher. The questionnaires were anonymous with participants using a code for helping to match pre-with post data. The codes were also kept secret only known by the participant as the bearer. The names of the participants were not mentioned anywhere in relation to the collected responses.

Chapter Four: Results

This section presents the findings in this study. The findings on the background and demographic characteristics of participants including nursing career choice information are presented first. Then, the other results are presented according to the objectives of the study and these include; the perception of participants towards the nursing profession before and after the orientation presentation, the attitude of the participants towards the nursing profession before and after the orientation presentation. Additionally, the effect of the orientation presentation on perception and attitude is also presented here. A total of 64 first year nursing students participated in this study in the pre-test and 61 participated in the post-test. These were from 4 institutions in central Uganda.

Participants' Demographic Characteristics and Nursing Career Choice information

A total of 13 items were assessed in section 1 of the pre-test questionnaire. These included; Age, gender, nationality, sponsor, institution, semester of study, source of information about nursing, preference order of nursing, first career of choice, influence of family and friends in the choice of nursing, having a nurse in the family, choosing nursing by self, and reason for choosing nursing. Participants were given multi-choice questions on each item hence had to choose what best applied to them and some items had more than one applicable. On the source of information about nursing, participants chose more than one option. Possible sources (4) were listed, with "other" as an option for specifying the unstated sources and participants were free to choose more than one option that applied to them. The results in this section are presented in Figure 2, Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 (reasons for choosing nursing).

Figure II

Age Ranges of Study Participants

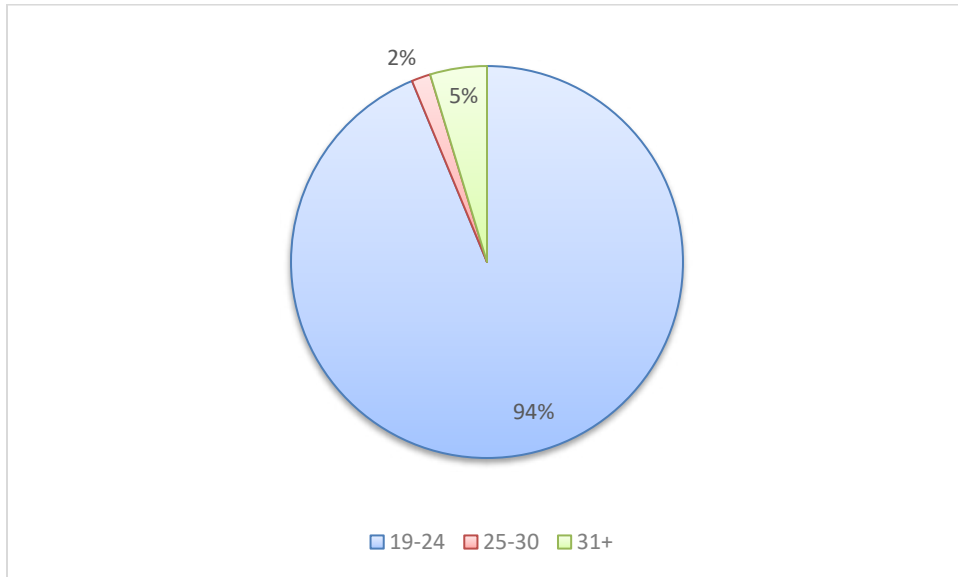


Figure 2, shows that majority of the study participants were in the age range of 19-24 with only 6% being above 24yrs. The mean age was 22. The lowest age was 19yrs and the highest was 39 yrs. The difference between the highest and lowest age(range) was 20.

Table I*Other Demographic Characteristics of Participants and Nursing Career Choice Information*

Item	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	26	40.6
Female	38	59.4
Sponsor/Tuition source		
Private	46	71.9
Government	10	15.6
Self	8	12.5
Training institution		
Private	42	65.6
Public	22	34.4
Semester of study		
One	11	17.2
Two	53	82.8
Nursing Career Choice Information	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
First Career of Choice		
Medicine	31	48.4
Nursing	20	31.3
Pharmacy	7	10.9
Others	6	9.4
Source of Information on Nursing Career		
Family and friends	45	70.3
School career department	21	32.8
TV/movies	8	12.5
Online media (google, facebook, youtube, etc)	6	9.4
Others	4	6.2

The findings presented in Table 1 show that; 59.4% of the participants were female while 40.6% were male. In addition, majority of the participants (71.9%) were on private sponsorship and 65.6% being from private institutions. Also, more than 80% of the participants were starting

semester two with only 17% in semester one. Concerning order of career choice, the majority (48.4%) preferred medicine to nursing, and only 31.3% had nursing as their first choice. The majority of participants (70.3%) learned about nursing through family and friends followed by school career development department (32.8%).

Table II

Influencers on Career Choice

	<i>Frequency (N)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Friends/ Relatives		
Yes	35	54.7
No	29	45.3
Having a nurse in the family		
Yes	30	46.9
No	34	53.1
Chose nursing by self		
Yes	45	70.3
No	19	29.7

The findings in Table 2 show that; majority (70.3%) of the participants were self-influenced. In addition, 54.7% indicated family and friends while 46.9% reported to be influenced by having a nurse in the family.

Table III*Participants' Reasons for Choosing Nursing*

<i>Response(s)</i>	<i>Frequency(N)</i>	<i>Percentage (%) with Yes</i>	<i>Percentage (%) with No</i>
Desire to help others	46	71.9	28.1
Had experience caring for a sick relative	25	39.1	60.9
Nursing is a fulfilling career	21	32.8	67.2
Inspired by nurses	19	29.7	70.3
Ease to get jobs	18	28.1	71.9
Grades determined	16	25.0	75
Opportunity to go abroad	13	20.3	79.7
My Family decided for me	8	12.5	87.5
It's a high-income source	4	6.3	93.7
Others	4	6.3	93.7

The findings in Table 3 indicate that; the most common reason the respondents gave for choosing to do nursing was the desire to help others (71.9%), followed by having an experience caring for the sick (39.1%). Nursing as a high- income source and shortage of money were the least selected (6.3%) reasons for joining the nursing profession respectively.

Participants' Perception of the Nursing Profession Before the Presentation

The participants' perception of the nursing profession was assessed before the presentation using the pre-test perception questionnaire. A total of 20 items were included in the questionnaire on a 4-point Likert scale. With scores of strongly agree (SA=4pts), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1). The mean scores on perception were obtained for every item as well as the standard deviation to determine the extent to which the participants agreed or disagreed with the statements in the perception questionnaire. These are in Table 4.

Table IV

Participants' Response scores on Pre-test Perception of Nursing

	<i>Frequency (N=64)</i>				Mean response	Std. Dev
	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)		
Nursing is a profession on its own(autonomous)	4	8	24	28	3.2	.9
Nursing is a noble(admirable) profession	2	5	28	29	3.3	.8
Nurses need special knowledge and skills to practice	0	0	13	51	3.8	.4
Nursing is a profession for both male and female	1	3	11	49	3.7	.6
Males make good nurses	6	10	27	21	3.0	.9
Nurses are loved and respected in the community	0	6	32	26	3.3	.6
Nurses can make good marriages	7	11	31	15	2.8	.9
Nurses are doctor's helpers	16	9	29	10	2.5	1.0
Nurses collaborate with doctors in giving care	1	1	20	42	3.6	.6
Nurses can easily get jobs	2	5	33	24	3.2	.7
Nursing work is so tedious	3	5	34	22	3.2	.8
Nurses are well paid for the work they do	20	22	19	3	2.1	.9
Nurses do much work and are paid less	5	5	24	30	3.2	.9
Teaching is a specialty in nursing	2	15	29	18	3.0	.8
Nurses make good leaders	1	7	25	31	3.3	.7
Nurses participate in policy making	7	10	37	10	2.9	.8
Nurses advocate for patients	0	5	30	29	3.4	.6
Nurses are less likely to achieve higher qualifications and career advancements desired.	32	17	10	5	1.8	1.0
Nurses have many opportunities to practice	1	4	25	3	3.4	.7
Nurses contribute to the body of knowledge through research	3	4	16	41	3.5	.8

In the pre-test findings in Table 4; the items that participants most agreed with are; nurses need special knowledge and skills to practice (M=3.8, SD= .4), Nursing is a profession for both male and female (M=3.7, SD= .6), Nurses collaborate with doctors in giving care (M=3.6, SD= .6) and nurses contribute to the body of knowledge through research (M=3.5, SD= .6) among others. On the other hand, the items that participants most disagreed with are: nurses are less likely to achieve higher qualifications and career advancements desired (M=1.8, SD=1.0), nurses are well paid for the work they do (M=2.1, SD=.9), nurses are doctors' helpers (M=2.5, SD=1.0), nurses can make good marriages (M=2.8, SD=.9), nurses participate in policy making (M=2.9, SD= .8) and males make good nurses (M=3, SD=.9).

Participants' Perception of the Nursing Profession After the Presentation

The participants' perception of the nursing profession was again assessed after the presentation using the post-test perception questionnaire. The detailed findings are presented in Table 5. The items were measured on a 4-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree (SA=4pts), Agree (A=3pts), Disagree (D:2pts) to Strongly Disagree (SD: 1pt).

Table V

Participants' Response Scores on Post-test Perception

	<i>Frequency (N=61)</i>				Mean response	Std. Dev
	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)		
Nursing is a profession on its own(autonomous)	2	2	14	43	3.6	.7
Nursing is a noble(admirable) profession	0	5	16	40	3.6	.6
Nurses need special knowledge and skills to practice	0	0	14	47	3.8	.4
Nursing is a profession for both male and female	2	1	16	42	3.6	.7
Males make good nurses	3	6	31	21	3.2	.8
Nurses are loved and respected in the community	1	2	30	28	3.4	.6
Nurses can make good marriages	5	7	33	16	3.0	.8
Nurses are doctor's helpers	25	12	14	10	2.2	1.1
Nurses collaborate with doctors in giving care	1	4	15	41	3.6	.7
Nurses can easily get jobs	1	5	29	26	3.3	.7
Nursing work is so tedious	5	9	29	18	3.0	.9
Nurses are well paid for the work they do	13	18	23	7	2.4	1.0
Nurses do much work and are paid less	1	7	23	30	3.3	.8
Teaching is a specialty in nursing	0	5	22	34	3.5	.6
Nurses make good leaders	3	1	28	29	3.4	.8
Nurses participate in policy making	2	6	29	24	3.0	.8
Nurses advocate for patients	0	0	28	33	3.5	.5
Nurses are less likely to achieve higher qualifications and career advancements they desired	33	14	7	7	1.8	1.0
Nurses have many opportunities to practice	0	1	19	41	3.7	.5
Nurses contribute to the body of knowledge through research	0	1	20	40	3.6	.5

According to the post-test findings presented in Table 5, there was a great change noted in the students' perceptions of the nursing profession. The items that registered the greatest improvement following the presentation were; Teaching is a specialty in nursing (M=3.5, SD=.7), Nursing is a profession on its own(autonomous) (M=3.6, SD= .7), nurses have many opportunities to practice (M=3.7, SD= .5), Nursing is a noble profession (M=3.6, SD=.6), nurses are doctors' helpers (M=2.2, SD=1.1), nursing work is tedious (M=3.0, SD=.9), nurses can make good marriages (M=3.0, SD=.8), males make good nurses (M=3.2, SD=.8) and nurses contribute to the body of knowledge through research (M= 3.6, SD=.5).

Participants' Attitude towards the Nursing Profession Before and After the Presentation

The attitude of participants towards the nursing profession was assessed before and after the orientation presentation using the attitude questionnaire developed by the researcher. This questionnaire had a total of 10 items that were measured on a 4-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree (SA=4pts), Agree (A=3pts), Disagree (D:2pts) to Strongly Disagree (SD: 1pt). The mean scores for each item on attitude were generated to determine the items that the participants most agreed with and those they most disagreed with. The items that registered a change following the presentation were noted. The detailed pre-test findings on attitude are presented in Table 6 and post-test findings in Table 7.

Table VI*Participants' Pre-test scores on Attitude towards the Nursing Profession*

	<i>Frequency(N=64)</i>				Mean respons e	Std. Dev
	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)		
I am satisfied with the choice I made to study nursing	3	7	25	29	3.3	.8
If I am given an opportunity, I would change to another course	22	22	12	8	2.1	1.0
I Would encourage a friend to join nursing	3	2	35	24	3.3	.7
I plan to specialize in nursing at a higher level	6	5	19	34	3.3	1.0
Nursing will help me to fulfill my career dreams	1	8	16	39	3.5	.8
I do not mind attending to others' hygiene needs	9	13	30	12	2.7	.9
I don't mind what my peers think of my choice of career	3	3	27	30	3.3	.8
I have an idea of which area I want specialize in at a higher level in nursing	7	9	20	28	3.1	1.0
I can confidently speak about my nursing course when I am with students from other courses	2	4	17	41	3.5	.8
I will work hard to become one of the best nurses	0	1	13	50	3.8	.5

The pre-test findings on respondents' attitude towards nursing are in Table 6. The examples of items that participants most agreed with are; I will work hard to become one of the best nurses (M=3.8, SD: .5), I can confidently speak about nursing with my peers (M= 3.5, SD: .8) and Nursing will help me fulfill my career dreams (M= 3.5, SD: .8), If I am given an opportunity I would change to another course (M= 2.1, SD: 1.0).Correspondingly, the items that participants most disagreed with are; I do not mind attending to others' hygiene needs (M=2.7,

SD: .9), and I have an idea of which area I want to specialize in at a higher level in nursing (M=3.1, SD: 1.0).

Table VII

Participants' Detailed Post-test scores on Attitude towards the Nursing Profession

	<i>Frequency(N=61)</i>				Mean response	Std. Dev
	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)		
I am satisfied with the choice I made to study nursing	1	6	19	35	3.4	.7
If I am given an opportunity, I would change to another course	31	21	7	2	1.7	.8
I Would encourage a friend to join nursing	1	5	26	29	3.4	.7
I plan to specialize in nursing at a higher level	2	3	28	28	3.3	.7
Nursing will help me to fulfill my career dreams	2	4	25	30	3.4	.8
I do not mind attending to others' hygiene needs	14	10	19	18	2.7	1.1
I don't mind what my peers think of my choice of career	2	5	22	32	3.4	.8
I have an idea of which area I want specialize in at a higher level in nursing	3	9	22	27	3.2	.9
I can confidently speak about my nursing course when I am with students from other courses	1	4	23	33	3.4	.7
I will work hard to become one of the best nurses	0	0	17	44	3.7	.5

In the post-test findings presented in Table 7, there was minimal change noted in the students' attitude towards the nursing profession following the presentation. The items that registered some improvement following the presentation were; If I am given an opportunity, I would change to another course (M=1.7, SD=.8), I am satisfied with the choice I made to study

nursing (M=3.4, SD=.7), I have an idea of which area I want specialize in at a higher level in nursing (M= 3.2, SD=.9), I can confidently speak about my nursing course when I am with students from other courses (M=3.4, SD=.7), I Would encourage a friend to join nursing (M=3.4, SD=.7) and Nursing will help me to fulfill my career dreams (M=3.4, SD=.8).

Effect of the Orientation Presentation on the Perception and Attitude towards Nursing

The effect of the orientation presentation was obtained from dependent samples t-tests performed on the primary data collected about the attitude and perception of nursing students included into the study. The mean differences were obtained for both attitude and perception scores and the details are reflected in Table 8.

Table VIII*Paired T-Test results showing the Mean difference.*

		Mean [95%CI]	Std. Err	Std. Dev	Hypothesis alternative: Mean difference is < 0	Null hypothesis: mean difference is = 0	Hypothesis alternative: mean difference is > 0
					Pr(T < t)	Pr(T > t)	Pr(T > t)
Attitudes					0.438	0.876	0.562
	post	3.17 [3.06,3.27]	0.05	0.40			
	pre	3.18 [3.07,3.29]	0.05	0.42			
	diff	-0.01 [- 0.14,0.12]	0.07	0.50			
Perceptions					0.984	0.033	0.016
	post	3.23 [3.16,3.30]	0.04	0.28			
	pre	3.13 [3.05,3.21]	0.04	0.30			
	diff	0.10 [0.01,0.20]	0.05	0.36			
Overall					0.908	0.185	0.092
	post	3.21 [3.14,3.28]	0.04	0.28			
	pre	3.15 [3.07,3.22]	0.04	0.30			
	diff	0.06 [- 0.03,0.16]	0.05	0.37			

Ho:mean(diff)=0

The findings in Table 8 indicate that the perception of the nursing students towards the nursing profession significantly improved after the orientation activity. This is shown by $\Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.033$ & $\Pr(T > t) = 0.016 > 0.05$ at 5% level which means that H_0 : mean difference is = 0 and thus implies that on average, the perception of these students was considerably better after the orientation activity as compared to the situation before.

Conversely, the findings in Table 8 also indicate that there was no statistically significant change in the attitude of the nursing students ($p > 0.05$ at 5% level if significance) following the

orientation presentation. Hence the orientation presentation did not have a statistically significant effect on the students' attitude towards nursing as a profession. Nevertheless, there was some effect of the presentation that was noted on particular aspects of participants' responses on attitude. For instance, participants who would change to another profession given opportunity reduced after the presentation (Before: M=2.1, D: 1.0) in Table 6, and (After: M=1.7, SD: 0.8) in Table 7.

Therefore, the study results show that the orientation presentation caused a statistically significant positive change in the way nursing students perceived their profession. Students understanding of professional advanced roles like teaching improved, professional autonomy and respect, collaborative nature, and practice opportunities improved. There was also improvement on the way students perceived marriage and the ability of males to make good nursing professionals. The perception of nursing work being so tedious decreased following the presentation. However, there was little to no effect observed on the attitude of these students towards their chosen profession of study following the orientation presentation.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of an orientation activity on the perception and attitude of first year direct bachelors nursing students towards the nursing profession. The study had three objectives which included: To identify the students' perception of the nursing profession before and after the presentation, to identify the students' attitude towards the nursing profession before and after the presentation and then to describe the effect of the orientation activity on the students' perception and attitude towards the nursing profession.

Participants' Perception of the Nursing Profession

According to the findings in the current study, it was noted that the overall perception of the nursing profession after the presentation was better than that before the presentation. Students became more aware of what nursing involves following the presentation. Their perception of nursing advanced roles like policy making and teaching was limited before the presentation, there also an unfavorable score on the pretest perception on marriage as many thought nurses do not make good marriages, and also gender bias was noted as many thought males do not make good nurses. The findings are similar to those in a study where students held limited ideas of the roles of nurses and midwives as well as professionalism of nursing before the orientation activity (Raymond, et al, 2018). This current study revealed that family members and friends were the main source of information on nursing. Not all family members have technical knowledge of nursing and the counsel given to these students is sometimes not of true content. Students need to be given the right information on nursing early enough before they join the course.

In addition, the findings in this study reflected a friendlier gender stereotype concerning nursing in that majority of the participants perceived nursing to be a profession for both male and

female before and after the presentation. These findings disagree with a number of studies that revealed a gender stigma in nursing with a female bias, with participants perceiving nursing as a female profession (Sanad & Awadhalla, 2016; Abbas, Zakar & Fischer, 2020). It's clear that the gender stigma in nursing is on a continuous decrease as many are coming to appreciate the gender balance in nursing.

Furthermore, majority of the participants in this study thought of nursing as being a tedious job. This is in synchrony with the findings in another study by Raymond and colleagues (2018) who reported that participants perceived nursing as more hands-on(tedious), which is challenging and demanding when compared to what most participants would prefer in a career. This is a direct call to the educators, counsellors and mentors to emphasize the principles of the profession, which are loving and caring for people, right at the beginning of the course. This can help students to be more willing to go an extra mile when offering the needed care, no matter how tedious and demanding this could be.

In this study many of the Participants perceived nursing as a job that pays less compared to the work that nurses do. This perception did not change much even after the presentation. The findings of less pay are similar to the ones in a study that was done in Croatia where students perceived nursing as a low paying job compared to the work done (Cukljek, et al, 2017). According to Social cognitive career theory on interests; people are most likely to develop interest in activities from which they expect positive (valued) outcomes (Hacket, 2017). An expectation of low pay could negatively affect the interest and performance goals of these students in nursing. This can be a potential cause of attrition of nurses since they might consider other professions with better pay. Hence there is need to address the concern of low pay in nursing to motivate nursing students to higher performance. Notably, the concern of little pay has

recently been addressed by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) as an issue worldwide. ICN demands equal pay for equal work within nursing and the health sector (ICN, 2022). The effort to lobby for better payment for nurses should be relentless.

A good number of students in this study perceived nurses as doctors' helpers. This is similar to the finding in another study where students perceived nursing as a less fulfilling career that is inferior to other health care courses (Liaw, et al, 2017). Despite the indispensable roles that nurses play, there is still need to uplift the image of the profession and make it more respectable and appealing to the students who have intentions of join health related professions.

Participants' Attitude towards the Nursing Profession

In this study, the attitude of nursing students before and after the presentation was also determined. The findings indicated that majority of the participants were; satisfied with nursing, willing to remain in the course and planning to work hard during the course. Majority expressed interest in higher education in the nursing field although the specific area to specialize in nursing was still unclear to many. The major change noted following the presentation was in the increased interest in nursing as more students were determined to remain in nursing even if they were to be given an opportunity to change to another cause.

Most participants in the current study were not comfortable with attending to the hygiene needs of others before and after the presentation. This portrayed these students as caring less on the altruistic aspects of the nursing profession even though they expressed a desire to care for the sick. It is similar to a study conducted in Turkey where many students were less interested in altruistic aspects of nursing (Elibol, Kader & Seren, 2017). Nurse educators have a responsibility to mentor students with modeling, counseling, and positive career behaviors to influence their

thoughts for better. Reinforced self-efficacy throughout nursing as a career can continually develop greater interest in advancing through nursing education (Fillman, 2015). With more interest, the students' attitude towards nursing become more favorable (Midilli, & Durgun, 2017). This particular finding could be more explained in details in case participants were to be given a chance to discuss their feelings. Hence this call for a mixed method study to explore more detailed responses on such items.

Effect of the Orientation Presentation

The effect of the intervention was shown by the mean difference. The mean difference using the paired t-test was significant for perception and not for attitude. This means that the intervention had a significant effect on the students' perception of the nursing profession but no significant effect on their attitude towards the nursing profession. This could be because majority of the students did not have nursing as the first career of choice hence their attitude was unlikely to change no matter the orientation.

Nevertheless, there was some effect of the presentation that was noted on particular aspects of participants' responses on attitude. Specifically, an increase was noted in the students' interest in nursing as the number of those who would change to another course in case of opportunity decreased. This indicates that following the presentation, more participants got to like nursing more. This could be because they got to know how broad nursing is with different roles and specialties which they could possibly grow into. These findings are similar to those in a study done in Korea, where participants' major satisfaction had a significant statistical correlation with social support and career identity (Kim & Kim, 2014). Also, another study in Turkey revealed that students who have information and awareness, and those who have positive thoughts regarding nursing tend to have high levels of motivation, professional self-concept and Self-esteem (Yilmaz, Sabancıoğulları & Kumsa, 2016). Hence with more highlight of the nursing profession to students, students' interest in nursing could improve with time and this could lead to more positive attitude. With a positive attitude, high quality nurses are produced and hence quality health care becomes an assurance.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

The study had three objectives which included: To identify the students' perception of the nursing profession before and after the presentation, to identify the students' attitude towards the nursing profession before and after the presentation and then to describe the effect of the orientation activity on the students' perception and attitude towards the nursing profession.

The findings revealed that students had some favorable perceptions of nursing before the presentation for example; the need for knowledge to practice, the profession being for both male and female, professional collaboration, contribution to research, etc. However, their ideas were limited in some other aspects of nursing for example; advanced roles, males making good nurses, marriage, nurses pay compared to work, etc., which shows that students join nursing with limited and unfavorable perceptions. Following the presentation, there was improvement in their perception in a number of aspects like advanced roles, marriage, gender, professional autonomy among others.

In addition, although some aspects of attitude were favorable like intention to remain in nursing, desire to work hard, nursing being able to help in fulfilling a dream career but a good number noted a discomfort to take care of the hygiene needs of patients. Following the presentation, the major change noted was in the students' attitude was increased interest in nursing as more students were determined to remain in nursing even if they were to be given an opportunity to change to another cause. However, the caring for the hygiene needs of patients remained the most unfavourable score in attitude. This indicated that more effort is needed to change the students' attitude especially caring for the hygiene needs of others. The principles of

the profession like love, caring, empathy, compassion, etc., should be emphasized to students during the training to influence their attitude and behavior toward patients' hygiene needs.

Therefore, the study results show that the orientation activity caused a statistically significant positive change in the way nursing students perceived their profession. However, there was little to no effect observed on the attitude of these students towards their chosen profession of study. Orientation programs need to be done early even before these students join the course. With the right information, students get to know what is involved in the nursing course, their interest in the course improves, they can make well informed decisions in line with performance goals, career growth and specialization goals. With more well-planned orientation, their attitude towards the nursing profession could be influenced more towards positivity. Also, with more positive attitude, these students will be likely to make good nurses after qualification hence offer quality nursing care.

Educators and nurses as role models should pick interest in knowing the perception of these students at the beginning of their course to be able to guide them better and to give correct information on the wrong perception. There should always be an intentional move to create positive professional experiences amongst nursing students and the potential nursing students who are still in high school.

Ministry of education and sports should organise orientation activities early enough for the potential nursing students who are still in high school. In these orientation programs, nurses should be made part so that they can provide technical guidance and counsel to the students.

The findings on reasons for choosing nursing, preference order of nursing, source of information on nursing and influence of family and friends in the choice of nursing can help both nursing educators and policy makers to further understand what is contributing to the increased

enrollment in nursing. Thus, the information can be used to improve enrollment criteria and career guidance strategies. Social support is highly important even after joining the course and it can be offered through well-organized orientation programs to nursing with measurable output indicators.

Other researchers could do another study amongst other health professionals in Uganda on their perception of the nurses' roles to identify any gaps which can be covered by a planned intervention. Also, MOH should ensure that nurses' pay is balanced, which can help to address the issue of nurses feeling undervalued and low in hierarchy.

Limitations of the Study

The quantitative approach limited the in-depth expressions of the students' perception of the nursing profession. Here the questionnaire had a variety of responses that could help a participant to try to bring out a clear image of the nursing profession they had. Future studies could employ a mixed method approach to get more detailed responses.

The orientation activity was only for one hour which may not have been adequate enough to address all the possible concerns and student questions though the researcher shared her contact with study participants to give access for those who had unanswered questions after the orientation presentation. The limited orientation time might have affected the outcomes of the attitude of students following the presentation because no significant change was noted. Further studies should allocate more time for the orientation activity to possibly create more impact.

The sample size was a bit small and this limits the generalizability of the study findings to broader populations both locally and globally. Other studies should have more participants to get findings that can apply to a wider population.

Contribution of the Study Findings to the General Knowledge

The study findings give a highlight of how nursing students in Uganda view nursing and how they feel about the Nursing profession. This can help in comparison of Uganda nursing students to students in other parts of the world. The mixed attitude and perception of nursing, some favorable and others unfavorable, helps all stake holders of nursing education and practice to be aware of the state of the students who join or are intending to join the nursing course. The findings also give information on the gaps in nursing career guidance and hence can guide in coming up with better strategies of helping potential students to get correct information about the nursing profession before joining this course.

In addition, the findings form a basis for further research on nursing students career interests, choice and enrolment into the course among other areas. Such studies could help in highlighting possible ways of training better health workers and maintain quality nursing care world-wide.

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[sessmgr04&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=EJ1054886&db=eric](https://web-b-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.bethel.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=5&sid=e192cb3e-2ece-41b5-bbaf-0811d13ce887%40pdc-v-sessmgr04&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=EJ1054886&db=eric)

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form.

My name is Nakawunde Aisa a master's student of Uganda Christian University carrying out a study entitled; Effect of an Orientation Activity on Perceptions and Attitude Towards the Nursing Profession: A Multisite Study on First Year Direct Bachelors Nursing Students. You are kindly invited to participate in this study.

My contact details: Nakawunde Aisa **Tel:** 0775578983 **Email:** nakawundeblessing@gmail.com

This study is being conducted as a part of a graduate student dissertation for a Masters in Nursing. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

Please read the information below and understand, before answering the questions.

Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary and you as a participant will not be coerced or incentivized to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time you feel uncomfortable and wish to withdraw. There will be no penalties either at the beginning or in the middle of the engagement.

Inclusion criteria:

1. First year bachelors nursing student.
2. Should be a direct entrant from high school.

Exclusion criteria:

Students who are retaking courses units in first but are meant to be in second year.

Purpose of the study:

The purpose of the study is to determine the effect of an orientation activity to the perception and attitude of first year direct bachelors nursing students towards the nursing profession.

Potential Risks/discomfort:

There are no foreseen risks, in the case of confidentiality a declaration by the researcher is attached.

Potential Benefits

Direct:

An orientation presentation on the Nursing Profession, roles of a professional nurse and opportunities in nursing will be done as part of this study and a handout on the presentation content will be given after.

Indirect:

1. Participants could end up more focused with better performance during the course
2. Participant could find it easy to do career planning after this course

Confidentiality Declaration by Researcher:

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study cannot be identified with you and will remain confidential.

No names will be used. Only assigned codes will be written on the questionnaires.

Confidentiality will be maintained by means of coded and strict control access to the data.

Research Ethics concerns:

This research was reviewed and approved by Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee (UCU-REC), In case of research ethics concerns and your rights as a participant, contact UCU-REC Chairperson Prof. Peter Waiswa on 0772405357 or pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug or UCU-REC Secretariat, Mr. Osborn Ahimbisibwe, 0775737627 or oahimbisibwe@ucu.ac.ug

Participant’s declaration

I fully understand procedures described above.

My questions and concerns have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study.

Name of Participant..... Signature.....

Date..... Telephone/contact.....

Name of witness Signature.....

Date..... Contact/ Telephone.....

Principal Investigator (Researcher’s) Name:


Signature..... Date:


Appendix B: Data Collection Tool: Pre-Test Questionnaire

Participant's Study Code.....

Section 1: Background and Demographic Characteristics of Student

Instruction: Write your responses in the given space, where applicable, put a tick on your chosen response.

Items	Response
1.Age	
2.Gender Male Female	
3.Nationality	
4.Sponsor/ source of Tuition A). Private B). Government C). Self	
5.Training Institution	
6. Semester of study A). One B). Two	
7. How did you learn/ get to know about nursing? (tick all that applies to you) A). Family and friends B). Television C). Movies D). Online media E). Print media f). School career department other(s) specify.....	 <p>UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY APPROVED UNTIL 11 MAR 2023 RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE</p>
8. Was nursing your first career of choice? A. 1 st choice B. 2 nd and above	
9. If nursing was not your first career of choice, which career was your first choice?	
10. Did your family/relatives/ friend influence your choice to study nursing?	

A). Yes B.) No	
11. Do you have a person(s) in your family who is a nurse? A). Yes B). No	
12). Did you choose nursing by yourself? A) . Yes B) . No	
13. Why did you chooses to study nursing? Tick all reasons that apply to you. A). Desire to help others B). Experience in taking care of a sick family member C). I find nursing to be a fulfilling career D). My grades determined my choice E). Nurses find it easy to get jobs F). It's a high- income source G). Gives an opportunity to go abroad H). My family decided for me I). I was inspired my other nurses Other reason(s) specify.....	 <p>UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY APPROVED UNTIL 1 1 MAR 2023 ★ RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE</p>

Section 2: Students’ Perception of the Nursing Profession: SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, A= Agree, SA= strongly Agree

Item	Response			
	SD	D	A	SA
1. Nursing is a profession on its own(autonomous)				
2. Nursing is a noble(admirable) profession				
3.Nurses need special knowledge and skills to practice				
4. Nursing is a profession for both male and female				
5. Males make good nurses				
6. Nurses are loved and respected in the community				
7. Nurses can make good marriages				
8. Nurses are doctor’s helpers				
9. Nurses collaborate with doctors in giving care				
10. Nurses can easily get jobs				
11. Nursing work is so tedious				
12. Nurses are well paid for the work they do				

13. Nurses do much work and are paid less				
14. Teaching is a specialty in nursing				
15. Nurses make good leaders				
16. Nurses participate in policy making				
17. Nurses advocate for patients				
18. Nurses are less likely to achieve higher qualifications and career advancements they desired				
19. Nurses have many opportunities to practice				
20. Nurses contribute to the body of knowledge through research				

Section 3: Attitude towards Nursing Questionnaire: SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, A= Agree, SA= strongly Agree

Item				
	SD	D	A	SA
1. I am satisfied with the choice I made to study nursing				
2. If I am given an opportunity, I would change to another course				
3. I Would encourage a friend to join nursing				
4. I plan to specialize in nursing at a higher level				
5. Nursing will help me to fulfill my career dreams				
6. I do not mind attending to others' hygiene needs				
7. I don't mind what my peers think of my choice of career				
8. I have an idea of which area I want specialize in at a higher level in nursing				
9. I can confidently speak about my nursing course when I am with students from other courses				
10. I will work hard to become one of the best nurses				

The End.

Thank you for your time and response.



Appendix C: Data Collection Tool: Post-Test Questionnaire

Participant's Study Code.....

Tick in the available space your chosen response.

Section 1: Students' Perception of the Nursing Profession: SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, A= Agree, SA= strongly Agree

Item	Response			
	SD	D	A	SA
1. Nursing is a profession on its own(autonomous)				
2. Nursing is a noble(admirable) profession				
3.Nurses need special knowledge and skills to practice				
4. Nursing is a profession for both male and female				
5. Males make good nurses				
6. Nurses are loved and respected in the community				
7. Nurses can make good marriages				
8. Nurses are doctor's helpers				
9. Nurses collaborate with doctors in giving care				
10. Nurses can easily get jobs				
11. Nursing work is so tedious				
12. Nurses are well paid for the work they do				
13. Nurses do much work and are paid less				
14. Teaching is a specialty in nursing				
15. Nurses make good leaders				
16. Nurses participate in policy making				
17. Nurses advocate for patients				
18. Nurses are less likely to achieve higher qualifications and career advancements they desired				
19. Nurses have many opportunities to practice				
20. Nurses contribute to the body of knowledge through research				

Section 2: Attitude towards Nursing Questionnaire: SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, A= Agree, SA= strongly Agree

Item	SD	D	A	SA
1. I am satisfied with the choice I made to study nursing				



2. If I am given an opportunity, I would change to another course				
3. I Would encourage a friend to join nursing				
4. I plan to specialize in nursing at a higher level				
5. Nursing will help me to fulfill my career dreams				
6. I do not mind attending to others' hygiene needs				
7. I don't mind what my peers think of my choice of career				
8. I have an idea of which area I want specialize in at a higher level in nursing				
9. I can confidently speak about my nursing course when I am with students from other courses				
10. I will work hard to become one of the best nurses				

The End.

Thank you for your time and response.



Appendix D: Permission to Use Social Cognitive Career Theory

You have my permission to adapt our theory

Inbox



Gail Hackett <ghackett@vcu.edu>

11 Feb 2020,

20:29

to me

Good luck with your research!!!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nakawunde Aisha** <nakawundeblessing@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Feb 11, 2020 at 3:20 AM

Subject: Request For permission

To: <provost@vcu.edu>

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am Aisa Nakawunde a student from Uganda Christian University in East Africa. I am doing an academic research in nursing as part of my Master's program in nursing science. I happen to have chosen to use the Social Cognitive Theory to guide my study. I kindly request for a connection to MS. Gall Hackett to be able to request for her permission to adapt this theory for my study as she is part of team behind this wonderful theory. Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.
Thank you,
Nakawunde Aisa
Nursing student
Uganda Christian University.

Appendix E: Budget

S/N	Phase/ Item	Quantity	Rate (Ug Shs)	Amount
1	Proposal Internet services Printing Binding	2 copies pgs 3 copies	200@ page 50,000	400,000 66,000 150,000
2.	Data collection REC fees Research Assistants Power Point Handouts Transport to and from venue Consent forms Questionnaires for students Lunch for researchers	1 2 100copies 200,000 100 100 x4pgs = 400 4	150,000 200,000 200 4 5000 20,000 40,000	150,000 400000 20,000 800,000 500000 80,000 160,000
S/N	Phase/ Item	Quantity	Rate (Ug Shs)	Amount
3.	Data Analysis Statistician			1,000,000

4.	Dissertation			
	Printing	150 pgs x 3= 450	200	90,000
	Binding	3 copies	50,000	150,000
5.	Communication			
	Internet		200,000	200,000
	Telephone calls		80,000	80,000
	Grand Total			4,246,000

Appendix F: Appendix G: Research Time Framework


Month/Activity	2019 Jan	June 2020	March 2022	March 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022
Working on Idea Papers							
Proposal development							
Proposal Submission							
REC approval							
Data Collection							
Data analysis							
Working on dissertation							
Submission of dissertation							

The End.

Declaration

I, NAKAWUNDE...AISA hereby declare that this work is originally mine and there was no intentional plagiarism, nor was it submitted to any other institution before.

Nakawunde Aisa

.....  28/08/2023

28/08/2023

Approval

This study of the effect of an orientation activity on the perception and attitude of first year direct nursing students towards the nursing profession is the student's original work that has been prepared and compiled, with my supervision to be submitted for examination.

Sign. Faith N. Sebuliba

Date. 28th August 2023

Faculty: Dr. Sebuliba Faith (RN/M, DHT, BNS, MNS, PhD Nursing Ed.)



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SCHOOL OF RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT BY THE CANDIDATE (POST VIVA FORM)

Date: 28/08/2023

Name of Candidate: NAKAWUNDE AISA

Reg. No: RM16M11/501

Title of Dissertation: Effect of an Orientation Activity on the Perception and Attitude on First Year Direct Bachelors Nursing Students towards the Nursing profession, A Study Done in Four Universities in Central Uganda.

SN	COMMENTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Add more specific findings in the abstract	Findings added in more specific details	Specific Findings on the three objectives added. Refer to page(ii)
2	Provide more details and examples of specific misperceptions and their potential impact on students' attitude.	Got more literature of specific misperceptions	Examples of misperceptions added. Refer to (ii) and 21 paragraph 2.

3	Add more literature on the nursing roles and specialties.	More literature search done on nursing roles and specialties.	Finding added from three more studies. Refer to page 18 paragraph 2 and 3, also page 19 paragraph 2(Zakamumpa).
4	On data analysis, add more details on the exact descriptive statistics done.	Details on the descriptive statistics included.	Added details on measures of central tendency, dispersion and frequencies. Refer to page 39, paragraph 3 and page ii in the abstract.
5	Organize, label and format tables consistently	Tables organized, labelled and formatted for consistence	More organized and labelled tables. Refer to pages 44,45, 46, 47,49, 51, 52, 54.

SN	COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANNEL	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Edit the tittle and remove the word multisite and clear coverage defined.	Research title edited.	The word multi-site removed and study coverage made precise. Refer to tittle page.
2	Add limitations of the study	Identified study limitations and add them.	Study limitations added. Refer to page 63.
3	Add more literature	Searched for more literature	More literature added on nurses' roles and perceptions. Refer to page 18 paragraph 2 and 3, also page 19 paragraph 2(Zakamumpa).
4	Make findings clear and aligned to the objectives	Reorganized the study finding more clearly in line with the objectives.	Study findings linked to the objectives. Refer to page 47 to 55.

5	Make the research question clear	Research question re-written in a clearer way	A written clearer research question. Refer to page 7.
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Nakawunde Aisa

Candidate's Name

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Signature

Dr. Sebuliba Faith

Supervisor's Name

Faith Sebuliba

Signature