

# African American Non-Nursing Science Majors' Perceptions of Nursing in the Context of Career Ideals

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# Background and Significance

Comparison: U.S. population and U.S. registered nurse (RN) workforce

Race	U.S. Population (2012 U.S. Census Data)	RN Workforce (HRSA, 2010)
White	77.9%	83.2% (+5.3%)
African American	13.1%	5.4% (-7.7%)



# Purpose

- To explore the career behaviors of African American undergraduate non-nursing science majors and elicit their perceptions about nursing as a career
- To add information to the body of nursing recruitment and nursing workforce diversity literature

# Research Questions

- What are the:
  - Person inputs/internal self-directed processes
  - External influences
  - Career idealsassociated with career behavior for this group of students?
- What are their perceptions of nursing and what recruitment strategies may be gleaned from this information?

# Gaps in Literature

- No literature could be identified on perceptions of nursing that:
  - Focused exclusively on perceptions of African Americans
  - Included sample with 50% or greater minority students or studied African Americans as a distinct group



# Design

- Theoretical Forestructure
  - Career Theory
    - Lent, Brown & Hackett: Social Cognitive Career Theory
    - Fouad & Bingham: Culturally Appropriate Career Counseling Model



# Methods

- Methods
  - Qualitative description
  - Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014): Qualitative Data Analysis

# Sample

- Sample demographics- n=20
- Purposive sampling:
  - African American undergraduate non-nursing science majors
  - Colleges and universities in the U.S.
  - Age- 18-22 (mean= 19.5 yr.)
  - 6-first, 9-second, 5-third generation college
  - 5- first generation U.S.
  - Self-reported GPA 4.0-2.8
  - 17 “pre-med”; 3 research



# Results

## Themes

- **Theme 1:** Career Development: Internal and External Contributions
- **Theme 2:** The Ideal Career: Profession with Power
- **Theme 3:** Perception of Nursing: A Limited Profession



# Ideal: Profession with Power

- **Autonomy**

- *“I wanna be a physician, not even a physician assistant 'cuz I don't like to... like I can't take orders from people...”*



# Ideal: Profession with Power

- **Lifestyle freedom**

- *“They [doctors] get to go on vacation more and um you now, have more time to themselves I guess.”*

# Ideal: Profession with Power

- **Ability to personally affect change**
  - *“I want to help people, and I want to have, um, an impact on this world and do things that actually people will like remember me by.”*



# Power: Role Models

*“Like, I didn’t know people still think like that and I wasn’t angry, more so disappointed that he um, you know, doesn’t give African Americans a chance um at anything and, you know, just doesn’t talk to us and, and that like really hit me and it was like, you know, the reality is a lot of people do think this way and a lot of people who are minorities hear something like that and they feel shackled. They feel like they can’t break those stereotypes, ...so I think that’s influenced me in that I want to be a role model and show people like, ‘Hey, those stereotypes don’t apply to you!’ You know, you can break free of those stereotypes and those prejudices and judgements that people pass on you...I really want to be a role model and a mentor to people.”*



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# Perception of Nursing: A Limited Profession

Nursing perceived to have limited:

- Respect
- Power
- Desirability



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# Perception of Nursing: Respect

Nurse-patient relationship is valued but ...

- *“You have nurses doing more than what the doctors doing, they’re always with the patient and everything and that’s a hard job. You’re limited to what you can do because you’re a nurse, or in my head I think you’re limited, but there’s sometimes a nurse knows, you know, what’s better for the patient. And you know you have like 4 or 5 doctors in there to see one patient who they don’t really know and you [nurses] try to offer your advice, but at the end of day I don’t know, but at the end of the day the doctor like actually writes them a prescription or whatever ...”*



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# Perception of Nursing: Respect

## Experience with nurses improves respect

- *“I kind of started developing a relationship an ICU nurse and she kind of took me under her wing...she showed me the ropes... So, I came in like every single day for 5 straight months, Monday through Friday, for 3 hours with this ICU nurse...She allowed me to listen to a patient breathing, like to hear the sound of the lungs, stuff like that. I learned more about patients through the nurse than the doctors.”*



# Perception of Nursing: Power

## Autonomy:

- *“It makes nursing, I guess, almost... subordinate I would say, to doctors? What deterred me from it [nursing] was the fact that I could never be in charge... I felt like if I were to become a nurse I would always have to work under someone.”*



# Perception of Nursing: Power

## Lifestyle Freedom:

- *“I feel like nurses have to be like at the job like every single day and they probably don’t have much of an option. Um, I do know a few nurses...like some work like overnight shifts. ... and like I honestly would never choose to have like late night anything. Yeah. I just don’t think it fits with maybe my personality. Like I need time to myself more like a nine to five kind of thing.”*

# Perception of Nursing: Power Ability to Personally Effect Change:

- *“A lot of it [care direction] seems likes it would be coming from the doctor, like ‘These are the orders I want do.’ But some of those nurses, especially ones with experience, I've seen when I was in my internship in high school, nurses kinda have to play down, ‘Hey doctor, this is what's going on the patient. Looking at their chart, these levels went up. I'm reading the test results. You know, I think we might have to look at this. This might be going on. We might need to look at this medication. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.’ But they're [nurses] thinking, ‘Hey this is the problem!...”*



# Perception of Nursing: Power

## Education is Power:

- *“...it [nursing] doesn’t require typically as much education, and I think the amount of education a field requires, is kind of directly proportional to its importance...”*



# Perception of Nursing: Desirability

## Step up for some

- *“Um, they [parents] wouldn't, I don't think they would like it at all [if participant chose nursing over medicine]. They would tell me to keep going, definitely- I think my sister though, like my younger sister, if she wanted to be an RN it's fine for them, they'd have no problem. My sister, now, she's all over the place. She's 16, she just turned 16. She's in ROTC now, but she's gone from like, physical therapist, to teacher, to nurse, to police officer...”*

# Perception of Nursing: Desirability

## Safe haven for others

- *“Everyone [in the Nigerian community], I don't know if they find it the most easy or... I think it's more promising like they will definitely get a job. There is always jobs in healthcare. It's like everyone who comes here is like ‘Oh, I'll just be a nurse.’”*

## Step down for self

- *“I felt like I could do more, not that nurses don't do enough, but I wanted to be able to be at the top.”*



# Discussion

- Participants in this study (and their parents) believe that education and the title 'doctor' has the power to:
  - Distinguish them as well educated men and women
  - Provide them with security to live the lifestyle of their choosing

And...



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# Discussion

Will enable them to :

- Become a positive African American role model
- Contradict or disprove negative racial stereotypes

Note: 17 member checks conducted

*“If you are a doctor there is nothing left to prove-  
except maybe yourself to other doctors”*



# Discussion

Superficial, poorly informed images of nursing careers

- Image of 'doctor' overinflated; also poorly informed
- Limited/no knowledge of advanced roles in nursing
- Unknowingly, participants desire to work in fields in which APNs are functioning successfully

# Discussion

## Burden of race and career desirability:

- Would participants feel less pressure/strive for different lifestyle/career balance or pursue other options without the pressure to contradict negative racial stereotypes?



# Discussion

## Perceptions of Nursing:

- Lack of power: comparisons of RNs to MDs
- Nurses are less educated: confusion re: nursing roles (CNA, LPN, RN) and lack of information about the full scope of nursing
- Across cultures: Nursing= an “active” field, Medicine= a “knowledge and independent” field  
(Champion, Austin, & Tzeng, 1987)
- Experience with nurses improves image and respect

# Conclusion

- Education = power: Nursing will continue to be less popular career choice for academically inclined African American students as long as APNs are poorly visible
- African American students' awareness of negative stereotypes of Black culture may have implications for African American science majors' willingness to enter a field, such as nursing, which they perceive to be negatively stereotyped.

# Thank You!

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# References

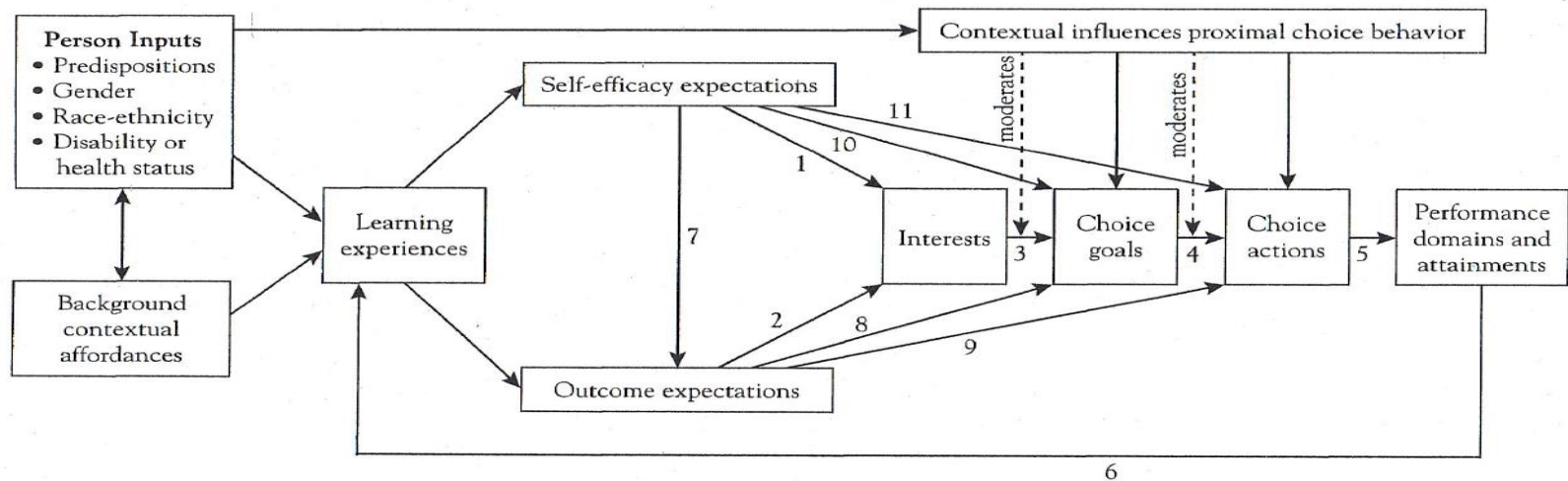
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# Social Cognitive Career Theory

Lent, Brown and Hackett, 1993

FIGURE 7.2. Model of Person, Contextual, and Experiential Factors Affecting Career-Related Choice Behavior



Note: Direct relations between variables are indicated with solid lines; moderator effects (where a given variable strengthens or weakens the relations between two other variables) are shown with dashed lines.

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# Culturally Appropriate Career Counseling

Fouad & Bingham, 1995

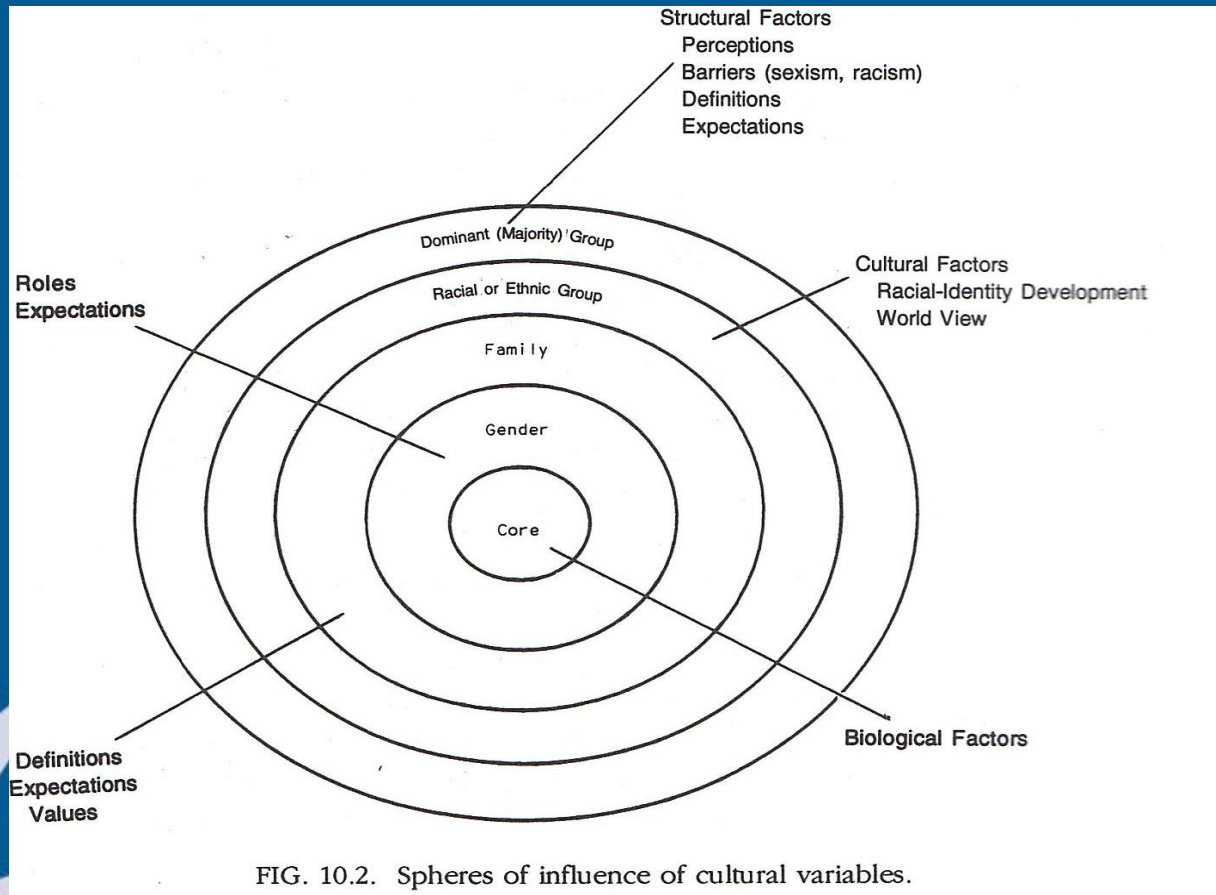


FIG. 10.2. Spheres of influence of cultural variables.