



## FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN INTRODUCTORY EXAMINATIONS AT PLATEAU STATE COLLEGE OF NURSING SCIENCES, JOS CAMPUS

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**ABSTRACT:** *The academic performance of nursing students in introductory tests is a significant component in determining their progress in both the educational and professional arenas. However, chronic under-performance in these exams has created major concerns at the Plateau State College of Nursing Sciences, Jos Campus. This research studied various variables that impact academic success, which include familial, learner-centric, and instructional aspects. The family characteristics evaluated were socioeconomic position, parental educational attainment, and familial support networks. Learner-centered qualities such as motivation, study habits, and self-efficacy were analyzed. While instructional components such as teacher effectiveness, curriculum appropriateness, and pedagogical techniques. The research adopted a descriptive survey method. Data were obtained from 177 nursing students of Plateau State College of Nursing Sciences and examined using the statistical technique of mean scores. The findings demonstrated that language limitations severely impede communication, self-confidence, and engagement in educational contexts (mean score = 3.3). A lack of fundamental comprehension of nursing theories and sciences was also connected with low performance (mean score = 3.2). Furthermore, poor study habits, inadequate desire, and psychological obstacles such as fear and concern surfaced as important impediments. Environmental aspects such as peer influence, social interactions, and instructor feedback affected students' academic experiences. Financial restrictions and demanding academic standards worsened these issues. The research concluded that these multidimensional issues harm academic growth and require a thorough correction technique. Recommendations include the deployment of language upgrading activities, such as English for Nursing Purposes (ENP), to eliminate communication hurdles, as well as the introduction of bridging programs to enhance important information. Workshops on effective study tactics, time management, and resilience training were given to address unproductive study habits and emotional concerns. The introduction of financial assistance programs and the strengthening of teacher feedback systems were also highlighted. This study underlines the necessity for an economic holistic framework in nursing education, which incorporates cognitive, emotional, and economical support systems to increase student accomplishment.*

**KEYWORDS:** Academic Performance, Under-performance, Socioeconomic Status, Study Habits, Self-Efficacy, Instructional Effectiveness, Language Barriers, Environmental Factors, Bridging Programs and Holistic Support Systems.



## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Numerous empirical investigations have examined the determinants contributing to student nurses' subpar performance in preliminary assessments from various analytical frameworks. Research conducted by Shappell and Wiegmann (2020), Al-Muslimawi and Hamid (2019), and Syazwani et al. (2020) has categorized the variables impacting students' performance in introductory examinations into three principal domains: familial influences, learner-centric factors, and instructional elements. Familial influences encompass the socio-economic status, educational attainment of parents, familial support mechanisms, and the overall family environment of the students. Learner-centric factors include students' motivation, engagement, attitudes, self-efficacy, learning styles, study habits, and academic histories. Instructional elements include the quality of educators, the accessibility and suitability of curriculum materials, instructional methodologies, and assessment practices about the subject matter.

The inability to succeed in preliminary examinations represents one of the most critical academic challenges. Notwithstanding the considerable endeavors undertaken by educators to mitigate this issue, a notable proportion of students persist in failing these assessments, which engenders adverse repercussions for their academic trajectories (Da Costa, 2022; Jason Charity Support Foundation, 2022; Margulieux et al., 2020).

In Nigeria, a substantial number of students have been documented as failing introductory examinations, thereby obstructing their academic advancement and overall success (Hayatu & Abubakar, 2019). The elevated failure rates in preliminary assessments have emerged as a pressing concern for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in Nigeria, as these outcomes not only compromise the quality of education but also impede the socio-economic development of the nation.

### Statement of the Problem

Nursing students' academic performance in foundational examinations is a pivotal determinant of their success in subsequent educational and professional endeavors. Nonetheless, at the Plateau State College of Nursing Sciences, Jos Campus, a concerning trend of inadequate performance in these examinations continues to manifest, despite the concerted efforts by educators and policymakers to mitigate this challenge.

Empirical research suggests that many factors, encompassing familial influences, learner-centered characteristics, and instructional elements, profoundly impact students' academic outcomes. Familial factors, including socio-economic status, parental educational attainment, and family support structures, critically shape students' academic preparedness. Additionally, learner-centric variables, such as motivation, attitudes, self-efficacy, study habits, and individual learning styles, play a crucial role in influencing their performance. Furthermore, instructional components, including the caliber of educators, the adequacy of the curriculum, and the methodologies employed in teaching, are instrumental in affecting academic outcomes.

In spite of these revelations, the persistent failure rates in introductory examinations present a significant impediment, adversely affecting students' academic advancement and the overall quality of education. This dilemma not only threatens the academic ambitions of nursing students but also bears wider implications for the healthcare system and the socio-economic development of Nigeria. It is essential to explore the factors that impact students' academic



performance in these examinations to formulate evidence-based interventions aimed at enhancing outcomes and promoting academic achievement.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the significance of learner-centric factors, such as motivation, attitudes, self-efficacy, study habits, and learning styles, in shaping students' performance in introductory examinations at Plateau State College of Nursing Sciences, Jos Campus
2. To analyze the impact of instructional elements, including the quality of educators, the sufficiency of the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices, on the academic success of nursing students in introductory examinations at Plateau State College of Nursing Sciences, Jos Campus.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The determinants affecting the academic performance of students in introductory examinations encompass the following:

Language constitutes an indispensable instrument for communication and learning across diverse fields and disciplines, including nursing. Nonetheless, numerous nursing students encounter significant challenges that hinder their academic performance, resulting in an inability to complete the introductory examinations that are critical for their advancement and eventual graduation. A potential contributor to this predicament is the language barrier. The term "language barrier" denotes the complications or impediments that arise from disparities in language proficiency, comprehension, or application between the communicator and the recipient of a message (Gerchow et al., 2021). Such barriers can adversely influence the quality and efficacy of communication and learning processes and outcomes within the realm of nursing education. Consequently, it is imperative to comprehend how language barriers impact nursing students' performance and engagement in introductory examinations, as well as strategies for amelioration. Moreover, it detrimentally influences their communication capabilities, self-assurance, and participation in classroom activities (Yan et al., 2021).

Students may encounter difficulties in reading, writing, or responding to inquiries in a language in which they lack proficiency or comfort (Mhlongo & Masango, 2020). Furthermore, they may struggle with the interpretation or application of information derived from various sources or contexts (Avila, 2021).

Ultimately, the language barrier shapes nursing students' attitudes and beliefs regarding learning and examinations: A considerable number of nursing students harbor negative attitudes and beliefs toward learning and examinations as a result of language barriers. They may exhibit diminished self-efficacy, motivation, and interest in both learning and excelling in examinations. Furthermore, they may experience fear, anxiety, disinterest, or aversion towards the processes of learning and assessment (Mhlongo & Masango, 2020).

Prior knowledge encompasses the information, skills, and experiences that a learner has already acquired, which subsequently influences their capacity to assimilate new information, skills, and experiences (Sutter et al., 2020). Prior knowledge plays a critical role in enhancing



learning and performance across various subjects and courses, including nursing. However, a multitude of nursing students grapple with significant challenges that impede their academic performance, leading to failures in passing the introductory examinations vital for their academic progression and graduation, an issue exacerbated by a lack of prior knowledge. Lack of prior knowledge refers to the insufficiency or inadequacy of information, skills, and experiences that a learner needs to learn new information, skills, and experiences (Sutter et al., 2020).

The absence of foundational knowledge can substantially influence the caliber and efficacy of both learning and performance processes and outcomes within nursing education. Insufficient prior knowledge detrimentally impacts nursing students' performance during examinations; consequently, these students frequently perceive assessments as arduous, tedious, or irrelevant due to their lack of foundational knowledge (Mohammad et al., 2020). This deficit may manifest as challenges in reading, writing, or responding to inquiries that necessitate prior knowledge. Additionally, students may encounter difficulties in interpreting or applying information derived from various sources or contexts (Mohammad et al., 2020).

The term study habit refers to the behavioral patterns and strategic approaches that learners utilize in preparation for examinations, encompassing aspects such as time management, goal setting, self-regulation, metacognition, and problem-solving skills (Sutter et al., 2022). Nursing students often confront significant obstacles in their academic performance, ultimately resulting in their failure to succeed in introductory examinations, which can be attributed to substandard study habits. Poor study habits denote the inefficacy or ineffectiveness of the behaviors and strategies employed by learners in their examination preparation (Sutter et al., 2022). Such ineffective study practices can adversely influence the quality and efficacy of learning and performance processes and outcomes in nursing education.

Ineffective study habits adversely impact nursing students' comprehension of concepts, terminology, and directives within the nursing curriculum: Numerous nursing students exhibit suboptimal study practices, including procrastination, distraction, or cramming (Ajjawi et al., 2020). These challenges engender considerable difficulties in grasping the essential concepts, terms, and instructions inherent in the nursing curriculum.

Most critically, subpar study habits impede nursing students' performance in examinations, as they may struggle with interpreting or applying information from diverse sources or contexts (Al-Muslimawi et al., 2019). Moreover, a substantial number of nursing students fail to allocate adequate time and effort toward studying nursing content, engaging in practice exercises, or reviewing core concepts. Additionally, they often lack effective learning strategies pertinent to nursing, such as self-regulation, metacognition, and problem-solving skills (Chand et al., 2021).

A considerable proportion of nursing students exhibit negative attitudes toward nursing or specific subjects within the curriculum, characterized by feelings of fear, anxiety, boredom, or aversion. Furthermore, they frequently display diminished self-efficacy, motivation, and interest in the field of nursing. These students tend to evade challenging tasks, surrender easily, or attribute their failures to external circumstances (Chand et al., 2021).



This phenomenon is closely associated with inadequate study habits, yet it emphasizes learning skills to a greater extent. Learning attitudes pertain to how students perceive and engage with their academic endeavors, encompassing their motivation, interest, confidence, concentration, and self-regulation (Najafi, 2019). Negative learning attitudes can detrimentally influence students' academic performance, overall satisfaction, and development of professional identity.

The social environment encompasses the social context and relational dynamics that shape an individual's behavior, attitudes, and opportunities. It incorporates factors such as familial relationships, peer interactions, educational institutions, community dynamics, cultural influences, and societal norms. The social environment can exert a profound impact on student learning outcomes and examination performance, as it possesses the capacity to influence their motivation, self-efficacy, levels of stress, coping mechanisms, and accessibility to resources.

Many student nurses are influenced by their peers, parents, teachers, and society in their attitudes and beliefs about nursing. They may face peer pressure, parental expectations, teacher feedback, or social stereotypes that affect their performance and engagement in nursing (Chand et al., 2021).

The demanding nature of nursing education and the pressure associated with examinations can lead to emotional problems among student nurses. These emotional problems can significantly impact their academic performance and contribute to failures in examinations. Many student nurses experience emotional problems that interfere with their learning and performance in nursing, such as stress, depression, anxiety, or trauma. They may also have low self-esteem, confidence, or resilience which affects their coping skills (Chand et al., 2021).

Examinations can trigger high levels of stress and anxiety among student nurses. The fear of failure, the pressure to perform well, and the overwhelming amount of content to study can create immense stress. According to a study by Nguyen, Davis and Adams (2018), nursing students often experience higher levels of stress compared to students in other disciplines. This chronic stress and anxiety can interfere with concentration, memory recall, and overall cognitive performance, leading to poor exam results. In a study conducted by Birhanu, Gebrekidah, Tesfaye and Tadesse (2021), depression was associated with poor academic performance among nursing students. Students struggling with depression may lack the energy and motivation needed for effective exam preparation, which can lead to failure.

Financial problems can significantly impact the academic performance of student nurses and contribute to failures in examinations. Many student nurses face financial problems that limit their access to quality education, resources, or opportunities for learning to nurse. They may also have to work part-time or support their families, which reduces their time and energy for studying nursing (Chand et al., 2021).

Nursing education often entails high tuition fees and additional educational expenses, such as textbooks, study materials, and clinical fees. The burden of these costs can lead to financial strain among student nurses. According to a study by Smith (2020), nursing students commonly experience financial stress due to the substantial financial obligations associated with their education. Difficulties in meeting these expenses can limit students' access to



resources necessary for effective exam preparation. Financial problems among student nurses can have a significant impact on their examination outcomes. Research by Brown and Burkhardt (2020) demonstrated that financial stress negatively affects academic performance in nursing students. Financial constraints can create distractions, increase anxiety levels, and impair concentration during study and examination periods. Moreover, the need to work longer hours or take additional shifts to cover expenses can lead to fatigue and reduced cognitive functioning, further hindering exam performance.

Cognitive ability plays a crucial role in the academic performance of nursing students. Strong cognitive skills are necessary for critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective information processing, all of which are essential for success in examinations. The level of intelligence, memory, or reasoning skills that a student possesses and that affects their ability to understand, process, and apply information (Shappell & Wiegmann, 2020).

Motivation and interest are essential factors that influence the academic performance of student nurses. Motivation refers to the driving force that energizes and directs behavior toward a specific goal, while interest is a feeling of curiosity or desire to learn about a particular subject (Al-Muslimawi et al., 2019). The degree of willingness and enthusiasm that a student has to learn and perform well in examinations (Al-Muslimawi et al., 2019).

Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal drive to engage in an activity because it is enjoyable and satisfying. Therefore, nursing students who are less intrinsically motivated are more likely not to be engaged and persistent in their academic pursuits, leading to poor academic performance and subsequently failure in examinations (Wu, Li, Zheng & Guo, 2020).

Interest in nursing can significantly predict academic performance among nursing students. Students who are more interested in nursing are more likely to be engaged in their academic pursuits, leading to better academic performance (Agoestina, Khusaini, Melan & Elizabeth, 2020). As it has been with many student nurses, they lack interest in a nursing career; some were forced by their parents to study nursing, and this leads to poor academic performance in several nursing students.

Physical health encompasses various aspects, including physical fitness, overall well-being, and the absence of illness or chronic conditions. Several studies have examined the relationship between physical health and academic performance among student nurses, highlighting the importance of maintaining good physical health for optimal academic outcomes. The physical condition that a student has affects their energy, concentration, or well-being (Al-Muslimawi et al., 2019).

Additionally, sleep quality and quantity are crucial factors that impact academic performance. Adequate sleep is essential for memory consolidation, cognitive functioning, and overall well-being. Al-Muslimawi et al. (2019) revealed that nursing students with better sleep quality achieved higher academic grades compared to those with poor sleep quality. Therefore, prioritizing healthy sleep habits and ensuring sufficient sleep duration is essential for optimal academic performance among student nurses.

Furthermore, the impact of physical health on academic performance extends beyond physical fitness, sleep, and nutrition. Chronic health conditions can significantly affect academic outcomes. A study by Emami, Habibi, Sharifi, Soori and Shirazi (2019) revealed that nursing students with chronic illnesses experienced more academic difficulties and lower



grades compared to their healthier peers. Managing chronic health conditions effectively, seeking appropriate medical care, and implementing strategies to mitigate the impact of the illness are crucial for maintaining academic performance among student nurses with chronic health conditions.

The feedback that a student receives from their teachers is positive or negative, supportive or unsupportive, and clear or vague regarding their performance and progress (Dolmans, Wolfhagen, Heineman & Scherpel, 2017). Teacher's feedback serves as a valuable tool for student's learning and development. Constructive feedback provides students with guidance, highlights areas for improvement, and reinforces their strengths. Effective feedback helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses, promotes self-reflection, and guides them in making necessary adjustments to enhance their performance (Mortimore, Williamson & Picton, 2018).

When teacher feedback is insufficient or lacks clarity, it can negatively impact student nurses' examination performance. Inadequate feedback may fail to provide students with specific information about their performance or suggestions for improvement. A study by Ramjan et al. (2017) identified a lack of timely and specific feedback as a contributing factor to student nurses' poor performance in examinations. Without clear guidance on areas requiring improvement, students may struggle to identify and address their weaknesses, hindering their ability to perform well in exams.

A study by Mortimore et al. (2018) highlighted that negative feedback without clear guidance on improvement strategies can negatively impact student nurses' self-confidence and subsequent exam performance. Constructive feedback that emphasizes specific areas for improvement offers guidance, and provides support can have a positive impact on student learning and examination performance.

The workload in nursing programs involves a combination of theoretical coursework, practical training, clinical placements, and additional responsibilities. The sheer volume of coursework and clinical hours can create a heavy workload, leaving students with limited time and energy for exam preparation. A study by Leppink, Paas, Van, and Der (2018) found that nursing students reported high levels of stress and time pressure due to the workload demands, which negatively affected their examination performance.

Limited time for exam preparation can result in insufficient study time and inadequate mastery of the material. Nursing curricula are comprehensive and require students to learn a vast amount of information within a limited timeframe. When students are overwhelmed by the workload, they may resort to superficial studying or cramming, which may hinder their ability to deeply understand and retain the material. This can result in poor performance in examinations that assess critical thinking and application of knowledge (McNeill, Kerr, Mavor & Dowell, 2017).

Furthermore, workload can affect students' well-being, including their physical and mental health. Chronic stress resulting from a heavy workload can lead to fatigue, burnout, and decreased motivation, all of which can negatively impact examination performance. A study by McNeill et al. (2017) found that nursing students experiencing high levels of workload reported higher levels of burnout, which correlated with lower academic achievement.



If exams assess content or skills that were not adequately covered or emphasized during instruction, students may struggle to perform well in those areas, leading to examination failure. A study by Gordon et al. (2019) found that nursing students' performance in examinations was positively correlated with their perception of alignment between course content and exam content.

Another factor within the assessment system is the clarity and specificity of exam questions. Ambiguous or poorly worded exam questions can lead to confusion and misinterpretation among students, affecting their ability to provide accurate and comprehensive responses. If students do not fully understand what the question is asking, they may provide incorrect or incomplete answers, resulting in poor performance in the examination. Nursing educators need to ensure that exam questions are clear, concise, and aligned with the learning objectives (Hsu, Hsieh & Chiou, 2018).

The grading and feedback process within the assessment system also influences students' examination performance. If grading criteria are unclear or inconsistently applied, students may not receive accurate assessments of their knowledge and skills. Inadequate or delayed feedback can hinder students' ability to learn from their mistakes and make necessary improvements for future exams. A study by Gordon et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of timely and constructive feedback in supporting student learning and enhancing examination performance.

## METHODOLOGY

In the framework of this research undertaking, a meticulously crafted descriptive survey design was systematically employed to facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter at hand. The study successfully engaged a total cohort of 177 nursing students, all of whom had demonstrated proficiency and success in their foundational class, thereby ensuring a robust and relevant sample for the investigation, and the data that were meticulously gathered throughout this process were subjected to rigorous analysis using both mean and percentage to yield meaningful insights.

### Factors Influencing Student's Academic Performance in Introductory Examination (n = 177)

Factors	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
One of the possible factors that influence academic performance in introductory examination is language barrier	91 (51%)	60 (34%)	14 (8%)	12 (7%)	3.3	Agreed
Many nursing students face difficulties and challenges in their academic performance and fail to pass the introductory examinations due to lack of prior knowledge about nursing.	80 (45%)	71 (40%)	15 (8%)	11 (6%)	3.2	Agreed



Poor study habits e.g. procrastination and studying reluctantly can negatively affect students' academic performance.	78 (44%)	69 (39%)	19 (11%)	11 (6%)	3.2	Agreed
Some nursing students have low motivation and interest in nursing and therefore can negatively affect their academic performance	69 (39%)	69 (39%)	19 (11%)	20 (11%)	3.1	Agreed
Social environment/interaction can have a significant impact on student nurses' learning and examination performance.	80 (45%)	71 (40%)	15 (8%)	11 (6%)	3.2	Agreed
Many student nurses experience emotional problems that interfere with their learning and performance in introductory examinations, such as stress, depression, anxiety, or trauma.	91 (51%)	60 (34%)	14 (8%)	12 (7%)	3.3	Agreed
Some nursing students are burdened with a lot of financial problems which significantly affects their academic performance in introductory examination	101 (57%)	54 (31%)	19 (11%)	3 (2%)	3.4	Agreed
Weak cognitive ability of students can result in poor academic performance	91 (51%)	49 (28%)	24 (14%)	13 (7%)	3.2	Agreed
Physical health challenges have negatively affected a lot of student nurses during introductory examination	100 (56%)	62 (35%)	9 (5%)	6 (3%)	3.4	Agreed
Peer pressure can have a significant impact on academic performance among student nurses.	78 (44%)	69 (39%)	19 (11%)	11 (6%)	3.2	Agreed
Most nursing students' academic performance in introductory examinations is influenced by feedback from teachers whether negative or positive	99 (56%)	61 (34%)	10 (6%)	7 (4%)	3.4	Agreed
Nursing science has a lot of workloads which immensely influence academic performance in introductory examinations among many nursing students	101 (57%)	54 (31%)	19 (11%)	3 (2%)	3.4	Agreed

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings derived from the conducted study have indicated that the presence of language barriers constitutes a significant factor that exerts a substantial influence on the academic performance of students enrolled in the introductory examination at the School of Nursing in Jos. The respondents, who participated in the study, expressed their belief that language barriers have the potential to adversely affect academic performance, as evidenced by a mean response score of 3.3. This particular finding aligns with the observations made by Yan et al. (2021), who identified that language barriers adversely impact students' communication skills, confidence levels, as well as their participation in various classroom activities. Furthermore, it has been noted that a considerable number of nursing students encounter challenges stemming from their lack of prior knowledge regarding nursing concepts, which has a detrimental effect on their academic performance, reflected by a mean response score of 3.2. This situation is congruent with the findings presented by Sutter et al. (2020), which revealed that a majority of learners possess limited prior knowledge that significantly hampers their capacity to assimilate new information, acquire essential skills, and gain relevant experiences. In a similar vein, Mhlongo and Masango (2020) demonstrated in their research that a significant number of nursing students exhibit insufficient or inadequate foundational knowledge in basic sciences and mathematics, both of which are crucial for successfully navigating nursing courses.

Moreover, the current study has also identified that poor study habits, characterized by behaviors such as procrastination and a reluctance to study, can harm academic performance, with the mean response score reflecting this concern at 3.2. This observation is consistent with the research findings of Ajjawi et al. (2020), who uncovered that numerous nursing students engage in inefficient or ineffective study habits, which may include procrastination, distractions, or last-minute cramming. Additionally, the study conducted by Al-Muslimawi et al. (2019) further substantiates this issue by revealing that many student nurses fail to allocate sufficient time and effort to studying nursing content, practicing exercises, or thoroughly reviewing fundamental concepts. The present study also uncovers that a subset of nursing students exhibits low levels of motivation and interest in the field of nursing, which can ultimately detrimentally affect their academic performance, as indicated by a mean response score of 3.1. This observation resonates with the findings documented by Chand et al. (2021), wherein the majority of their study participants demonstrated a tendency to avoid engaging in challenging tasks, exhibit a propensity to give up easily or attribute their failures to external factors beyond their control.

Furthermore, the social environment and interaction dynamics have been identified in this study as significant determinants that considerably impact the learning experiences and examination performance of student nurses, with a mean response score of 3.2 highlighting this aspect. This finding is corroborated by the research outcomes of Chand et al. (2021), which illustrate that student nurses frequently grapple with peer pressure, parental expectations, teacher feedback, and societal stereotypes that can adversely affect their performance and engagement levels within the nursing discipline. In the context of this present study, it has been observed that many student nurses experience various emotional challenges, including stress, depression, anxiety, or trauma, all of which interfere with their learning processes and overall performance, as reflected by a mean response score of 3.3. This observation is further substantiated by the findings of Chand et al. (2021), which indicate that a significant number of student nurses struggle with low self-esteem, confidence,



or resilience, ultimately impacting their coping mechanisms in challenging situations. Additionally, financial difficulties have been identified as a considerable factor that significantly influences the academic performance of certain nursing students, as indicated by a mean response score of 3.4. According to the research conducted by Smith (2020), it is evident that nursing students often encounter financial stressors as a result of the substantial financial obligations that are inherently associated with their educational pursuits.

The present research has identified several additional factors that are worthy of consideration, including, but not limited to, the observation that diminished cognitive abilities are perceived as a significant determinant contributing to subpar academic performance, with a mean response score of 3.2 indicating a moderate level of agreement among participants regarding this assertion. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that various physical health challenges have been reported to adversely affect a substantial proportion of student nurses as they navigate their introductory examinations, as evidenced by a mean response score of 3.4, which underscores the serious implications of health on academic achievement in this particular field of study. In addition to these cognitive and health-related factors, it has been established that peer pressure exerts a considerable influence on the academic performance of nursing students, with a mean response score of 3.2 suggesting that social dynamics among peers can significantly impact educational outcomes.

Moreover, the feedback received from educators, whether it is characterized as constructive or critical, plays an influential role in shaping the academic performance of nursing students, as indicated by a mean response score of 3.4, which highlights the importance of the educational environment and instructor-student interactions. Similarly, the substantial workload associated with nursing science programs emerges as a critical factor that significantly affects the academic performance of many nursing students during their introductory examinations, with a mean response score of 3.4 further emphasizing the challenge of balancing academic responsibilities with personal well-being.

These findings collectively illuminate a diverse array of factors, encompassing both individual characteristics and environmental influences, that can substantially impact the academic performance of students pursuing a nursing education. In alignment with these perspectives, a study conducted by Edward and Lucy (2019) in Ghana revealed that numerous factors exert a considerable influence on the quality of academic performance among student nurses enrolled at Kokofu Nursing Training College, with the research indicating that all the examined student-related factors had a pronounced effect on the academic success of these nursing students. Additionally, the investigation carried out by NurSyazwani et al. (2020) demonstrated that early exposure to the subject matter and the intrinsic interest of students significantly affect the academic performance of pre-diploma students, particularly in accounting subjects, thereby reinforcing the notion that engagement and prior experience are pivotal in shaping educational outcomes.



## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

**Policy and Curriculum Design:** The comprehensive findings of this study underscore the critical significance of identifying and addressing the multifaceted language barriers that nursing students encounter, along with the detrimental effects of inadequate foundational knowledge and suboptimal study habits, all of which conspicuously and profoundly affect their overall academic performance negatively. Consequently, it is imperative for educational policymakers and curriculum developers to diligently consider the integration of supplementary language support programs, as well as the implementation of foundational nursing courses and targeted study skills training, into the nursing education frameworks, thereby creating a more supportive academic environment that fosters student success and achievement.

**Student Support Services:** The results of this study remarkably highlight the pressing necessity for the establishment of comprehensive student support services that encompass a wide array of essential resources, including not only counseling programs aimed at alleviating stress and anxiety but also robust financial aid initiatives and mentorship opportunities designed to address the emotional, financial, and motivational challenges that nursing students frequently encounter throughout their academic journeys. Such initiatives are vital for the holistic development and well-being of students, as they provide critical support systems that can significantly enhance their overall educational experience and promote academic resilience.

**Faculty Development:** The profound implications of this study regarding the critical role that educator feedback and interaction dynamics play in the learning process suggest an urgent need for the development and implementation of professional development programs specifically tailored to train nursing educators in the employment of effective teaching methods, the delivery of constructive feedback, and the cultivation of a nurturing and supportive learning environment that prioritizes student engagement and academic success. By investing in the professional growth of nursing faculty, institutions can create a more enriching educational atmosphere that ultimately benefits both educators and students.

**Holistic Approach to Nursing Education:** The intricate interplay between cognitive, physical, and emotional factors influencing academic performance serves to underscore the paramount importance of adopting a holistic approach to nursing education that encompasses not only the academic curriculum but also the promotion of physical well-being, mental health, and resilience among nursing students. This multifaceted approach is essential for fostering well-rounded individuals who are better equipped to handle the rigorous demands of the nursing profession and who can provide compassionate and effective care to their future patients.



## CONCLUSIONS

The presence of language barriers emerges as a significant impediment to effective communication, the development of self-confidence, and active participation in classroom discussions among nursing students, which collectively contribute to adverse effects on their academic performance. Additionally, the existence of inadequate prior knowledge in essential nursing concepts and basic scientific principles stands out as a major contributing factor that leads to poor academic outcomes and hinders overall student success. Furthermore, the prevalence of poor study habits, coupled with low levels of motivation, and emotional challenges such as stress and anxiety, are pervasive issues that pose significant obstacles to students' academic achievements and overall well-being. Moreover, environmental factors, including the dynamics of social interactions, the influence of peer pressure, and the quality of feedback received from educators, play a substantial role in shaping the learning experiences and academic performance of nursing students. Financial constraints, alongside substantial academic workloads, exacerbate the myriad difficulties encountered by nursing students, thereby necessitating a concerted effort from educational institutions to provide adequate support and intervention strategies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Language Development Programs:** It is recommended that specialized programs, such as English for Nursing Purposes (ENP), be thoughtfully implemented to enhance language proficiency and communication skills among nursing students, thereby equipping them with the necessary tools to excel in their academic endeavors and future professional roles.

**Foundational Knowledge Enhancement:** The introduction of bridging courses aimed at strengthening basic sciences and nursing concepts is essential to ensure that students are equipped with the requisite foundational knowledge before advancing in their studies, ultimately fostering greater academic success and understanding.

**Study Skills Workshops:** The conduction of workshops that focus on effective study techniques, time management strategies, and methods for reducing procrastination is vital for enhancing academic performance and empowering students to take control of their educational journeys.

**Mental Health and Emotional Support:** The establishment of counseling centers and resilience training programs is critical in order to adequately address the emotional challenges faced by nursing students, including those related to stress, anxiety, and depression, thereby promoting their overall mental well-being and academic success.

**Financial Assistance Programs:** Providing a range of financial assistance options, such as scholarships, grants, or flexible payment plans, is necessary to alleviate the financial stressors that many nursing students experience, thus enabling them to focus more fully on their studies and personal development.

**Constructive Feedback Practices:** It is essential to train educators in the art of delivering constructive and supportive feedback that fosters a positive learning environment and



enhances student motivation, thereby contributing to improved academic outcomes and overall student satisfaction.

**Workload Management:** A thorough review and adjustment of the curriculum is imperative to ensure that it is designed in such a way that allows for a manageable workload, thereby enabling students to effectively balance their academic responsibilities with their personal lives and commitments.

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