



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### FACTORS AFFECTING THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG FEMALE NURSING STUDENTS

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#### ABSTRACT

Academic performance is the ability of students to cope with their studies as well as how various tasks assigned to them by their instructors are accomplished. Many studies were conducted by previous researchers have discussed the different factors that affect students' academic performances.

**The aim of the study** is to determine the factor affecting academic performance among female nursing student.

**A descriptive design was used in this study.** The study was conducted in Nursing College at Taibah University (Saudi Arabia). The study comprised of 205 under-graduate female nursing students was chosen from the above mentioned setting. The actual number of female matinee nursing students 258 of different academic levels: level 3 to level 8. Two tools was used to collect data. The first tool was Interviewing questionnaire, the second tool was self-reporting questionnaire to gather data on the factors affecting nursing students. The finding shows the most factor affect academic performance was from personal condition was feeling sleepy in class and less factor was difficult of breathing and from the study habit the most important factor affecting academic performance was studying only for quiz, teacher has mastery of the subject matter' had the greatest mean with a very high impact, and the time scheduled is not followed was considered high impact factor of school related aspects.

**The study finding concluded that** there are several factors pose a high impact on the academic performance of student nurses, with School-Related factors topping the list. Among the five (5) domains, study habits and teacher-related factors fall behind the school-related factors. Nonetheless, both categories are still deemed to be highly impactful.

**The main study recommendations:** 1- teachers should use varied strategies so as to improve the academic performance of the learners; 2- teachers should undergo seminars on teaching strategies to improve classroom instruction; 3-the researcher suggests a research specifying a subject in determining the factors affecting the academic performance of student nurses and adding respondents from level one to level three.

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## INTRODUCTION

Academic performance is the ability of students to cope with their studies as well as how various tasks assigned to them by their instructors are accomplished. It also includes the ability to study and remember facts and to be able to express such knowledge gained either verbally or in writing" (Dimkpa *et al.*, 2013). The students' performance plays an important role in producing best quality graduates who will become great leaders and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development. Academic performance is one of the major factors considered by employers in hiring workers especially for the fresh graduates. Thus, students have to put the greatest effort in their study to

obtain good grades and to prepare themselves for future opportunities in their career at the same time to fulfill the employer's demand (Sunshine *et al.*, 2015). Good academic performance is directly related to good scoring in various entrance examinations and job opportunities so it has been always a matter of concern for both parents as well as students. Achievement in school is affected by a number of factors, including the quality of the school, characteristics of the student's family such as socioeconomic status and parent's educational level, and the characteristics of the child. Motivation and home environment have a positive relationship with academic performance Suboptimal sleep affects students learning process and academic achievement (Laxmikant *et al.*, 2013). The higher education performance is depends upon the academic performance of graduate students. The measurement of students previous educational outcomes are the most important indicators of students future performance; this refers

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that the higher the previous appearance, the better will the student's academic performance in future endeavors be (Minnesota, 2007). Many studies were conducted by previous researchers have discussed about the different factors that affect students' academic performances. There are two types of factors that affect student academic performance which are internal and external factors. The internal factors come from the classroom environment such as class schedules, class size, student competence in English, learning facilities, English text books, class test result, homework, internet access, complexity of course material, exams system, environment of the class and others. While external classroom environment factors include family-related aspect, financial and work, personal problem, extracurricular activities and others" (Mushtaq and Khan, 2012).

Stomberg and Nilsson, (2010) found that the factors affecting a student's academic performance arise from several reasons. Thinking skills primarily affect student's learning faculties if they do not learn what they need to learn. If teachers do not know how to catch the attention of a student, the more student cannot make himself attentive to that subject. The student gets lazy because it has a subject that they think that it's a subject he perceives to be not so relevant to their course. Caranto & David, (2015) revealed that the factors affecting a student's academic performance such as personal condition, school-related aspect, study habits, home-related aspect and teacher-related aspect. These factors have highly effect on students' performance, the degree of impact of these factors differ according to personality and culture. Among the school-related factors found are unqualified and poorly trained teachers, inadequate facilities, and dilapidated instructional materials. Non-school factors include poverty, low educational attainment and illiteracy of parents and poor health and nutrition (Tosevski *et al.*, 2010).

Hayden *et al.* (2011) also pointed out that a student who is successful in his desired career has good study habits. In line with this, she stated that students should apply these habits to all of their classes. She also suggested that the students should not try to study all the subjects in a single period. Prater and Mcewen (2006) reported that the influence of social and economic disadvantage in the academic performance of school students noticed, they have stated that parents or guardians who have social, educational and economic advantage definitely strengthen the level of their child's success in future

Cerna and Pavliushchenko, (2015) greatly emphasized the importance of having qualified teachers in the field of teaching, and said that success of any program is conditioned by the ability of the teacher to teach. If there is failure at this point, the whole structure fails. Hence, the implementation, selection, preparation, and supervision of education will be affected. Moreover, Dayad (2000) mentioned that good teachers are constantly on the alert for methods and instructional materials that will make learning meaningful. With the wise selection and use of a variety of instructional materials or audio-visual materials, experiences may be provided to develop understanding.

### Significant of the study

A lot of research has been done on factors affecting academic performance of college students but there is scarce information

about academic performance of students. The result of this study may benefit the students by allowing them to understand better the factors that can affect their academic performance. They may be able to improve their academic performance with the findings that are established by this study. With this study's insights, the parents may be able to understand and help their children regarding their school matters and give them support. For the teachers, this study may help them to recognize problems encountered by the students that may pose an effect in their performance. They may find alternative actions on how to handle their students. For the school administrators, they may be able to promote thinking skills assessment in their school, letting their teachers understand the influences of their student's preferred learning styles that will promote adequate learning opportunities and effective instructions. So this study will enable the researcher to make recommendations to the Ministry of Education on what policies and strategies can be employed to improve academic performance in institutions of higher learning.

### Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to determine factors affecting the academic performance among female nursing students

### Research Question

What is the level of impact of the different factors on the academic performance among female nursing students?

## SUBJECTS AND METHODS

### Study design and setting

Descriptive design was utilized in this study. The study was conducted in Nursing College at Taibah University (Saudi Arabia).

### Sample size

The sample size was calculated through EPI info (Epidemiological information system) soft ware version 6 according to the following collected data, the confidence level 95% and a power of study 80%. The estimated sample size was calculated to be 205 female nursing students.

### Study subjects

Purposive sample: The study comprised of 205 under-graduate female nursing students was chosen from the above mentioned setting. The actual number of female matinee nursing students 258 of different academic levels: level 3 to level 8.

### Ethical approval

At the initial interview, each student was informed about the purpose and nature of the study, and the researchers emphasized that participation would be voluntary. The consent for participation was taken orally. In addition, the confidentiality of the data was maintained, explained and also printed in the questionnaire as follows: collected information was used only for the purpose of the study without referring to the personnel's participation through anonymity of the subjects that was assured by the coding of all data.

## Data collection tools

Two tools were used by the researchers for the collection of the required data based on review of relevant literature.

**Tool (1):** Interviewing questionnaire was used covered the following items (age, marital status, number of family members, family income, program satisfaction, chronic disease, premenstrual symptoms, academic years, GPA, sleeping hours per day, practicing exercise, sleep, study hours and number of meals per day).

**Tool (2)** Self-reporting questionnaire was used to gather data on the factors affecting nursing students along personal conditions, study habits, home-related aspects, school-related aspects, and teacher-related aspects of fourth year student nurses.

## Scoring System

### Legend

Statistical Limit: Description

- 4.2-5: Very High Impact
- 3.4-4.1: High Impact
- 2.6-3.3: Low Impact
- 1.8-2.5: Very Low Impact
- 1.0-1.7: No Impact

Scoring the questionnaire is done using a 4-Point Likert Scale: always (3), usually (2), sometimes (1), never (0). More than 60% means good and below 60% means poor. The questionnaire was self-administered by subjects and analyzed anonymously. The self-reported CGPA was used as an academic performance indicator. According to the current system, students must maintain their CGPA above 2.00 for continuation of enrolment in the programme. CGPA less than 2.50 was considered as poor, intermediate when the value falls between 2.50 to 2.99, good: 3.00 to 3.66 and excellent: 3.67 to 4.00 (Chadya and Basilia, 2008).

### Pilot study

A pilot study conducted in (10 %) of the total sample size, who were selected randomly, in order to test the relevance; language clarity and applicability of the study tool; and to estimate time needed to complete the initial tool. Based on the pilot study, the modifications were applied as translate the questionnaire into Arabic. The change needed well done.

### Field work

Data was collected in the period from the 1st of January to the end of April, 2016. The researchers coordinated and organized the field work with teaching staff members who were responsible for the desired lecture. Researchers asked them about the preferred time for data collection, in the first or last part of the lectures. The researchers introduced themselves to the students; the purpose and nature of the study were explained. Then the researchers explained the main parts of the questionnaire. After that, the questionnaire forms were distributed to students and the students were asked to complete the questionnaires by selecting only one answer. The

questionnaire took about (15-20) minutes to be filled. The researchers were present during data collection to clarify any questions from the students

## Validity and reliability

It was established for face and content validity by a panel of five experts who revised the tools for clarity, relevance, applicability, comprehensiveness, understanding, and ease for implementation and according to their opinion minor modifications was applied.

## Administrative design

An official permission was obtained from the dean of the Faculty of Nursing for data collection after explaining the purpose of the study.

## Statistical design

The obtained data were reviewed, prepared for computer processing, coded, analyzed and tabulated. Data entry and data analysis were done using SPSS version 20. Data were presented as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation. Chi-square test was used to compare between qualitative variables.

Independent samples t-test was used to compare quantitative variables between two groups and ANOVA test for more than two groups. Pearson correlation was performed to measure the correlation between quantitative variables. P-value was considered statistically significant when  $P < 0.05$ .

**Table 1. Distribution of study sample according to their socio-demographic characteristics**

variables	No	%
<b>Age</b>		
19-21	157	76.6
22-24	48	23.4
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	192	93.7
Married	13	6.3
Divorced	0	0.0
<b>Number of family members</b>		
≤5	29	14.2
5-7	130	63.4
≥8	46	22.4
<b>Family income</b>		
Lower	14	6.8
Middle	151	73.7
Upper	40	19.5
<b>Program satisfaction</b>		
Satisfied	135	65.8
Not Satisfied	70	34.2

**Table (1)** showed that most 76.6% of nursing students had age from 19 to 21 years. Also the majority of the nursing students were single. However, Five to seven family members size was reported by 63.4% of nursing students. While, large number of them (73.7%) have middle social class. Furthermore, two third (65.8%) of the nursing students have satisfied from academic program.

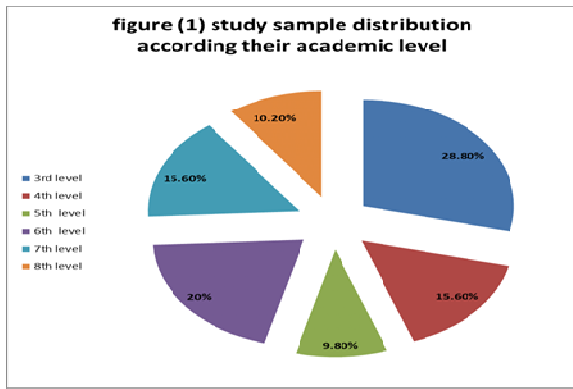


Figure 1. Illustrates study sample distribution according to their academic levels, third level represented 28.8%%, six level 20% but Fifth level represented only 9.8%

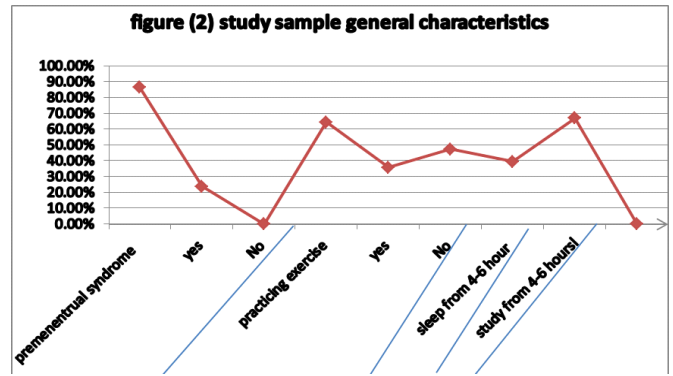


Figure 2. Total number of study sample was 205 majority of them (94.1%) were free from chronic diseases, 86.3% have premenstrual syndrome, 64.3% not practicing exercise, and 47.3% sleep from 4-6 hour, and 39.5% of them study from 4-6 hours. (66.8%) have meals less than 3 meals per day

Table 2. Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Nursing Students

Factor/item	Factor/ranking	Item ranking	Mean	Descriptive equivalent*
<b>Personal condition</b>	4	3	3.351	HI
• Feeling sleepy in class.		10	3.215	LI
• Feeling hungry in class.		29	2.531	VLI
• Difficulty in seeing.		32	2.433	VLI
• Difficulty in hearing.		35	2.281	VLI
• Difficulty in breathing.				
<b>Home-Related Aspect</b>	5	17	2.988	LI
• I live far from school.		27	2.593	LI
• I live near the school.		33	2.349	VLI
• I don't live with my parents.		26	2.642	LI
• Both my parents are working.		22	2.766	LI
• I do too much households.		21	2.847	LI
• I have many brothers and sisters.				
<b>Study Habits</b>	2	4	3.330	LI
• I study only when there is a quiz.		1	3.479	HI
• I feel tired, bored and sleepy.				
• I prefer listening to radio, watching TV, etc.		19	2.928	LI
• I am lazy to study.		16	3.044	LI
• I am disturbed when studying.		15	3.067	LI
• I have no time to study at home.		25	3.270	LI
• I study only when I like.		7	2.722	LI
• I don't have a comfortable place to study.	31	2.463	VLI	
<b>School-Related Aspect</b>	1	5	3.324	LI
• The time schedule is followed.		13	3.098	LI
• There are school programs.		6	3.301	LI
• There are available library references.		14	3.079	LI
• Classroom is comfortable enough.		30	3.224	VLI
• There is fast internet access in the Library.		24	2.725	LI
• There is enough space in the library.		9	2.497	LI
• Location of classrooms.				
<b>Teacher -Related Aspect</b>	3	8	3.422	LI
• Teacher has mastery of the subject matter.		11	3.165	LI
• Teachers discuss many topics in a short period of time.		12	3.153	LI
• Teacher uses audio/visual aids.		18	2.986	LI
• Teacher gives too much memory work.		20	2.865	LI
• Teacher provides varied activities.		2	3.252	HI
• Teacher uses lecture method only.		23	2.754	LI
• Teacher always scolds students.		36	2.222	VLI
• Teacher is frequently out/absent from class.		28	2.533	VLI
• Teacher is always late.				

\*Legend (4.2-5: Very High Impact) (3.4-4.1: High Impact) (2.6-3.3: Low Impact) (1.8-2.5: Very Low Impact) (1.0-1.7: No Impact).

Table (2) Analysis factors affecting the academic performance of nursing students. The first two (2) items in the personal conditions category are found to be of high impact. Meanwhile, the last three (3) items in the same subset fell in the low range. On the other hand, all indicators included in the category of study habits were considered highly impactful except for the last item which was ranked rather lower. Student nurses have been discovered to have rated home-related factors as low in impact. In school-related aspects, the first six (6) items are of high impact; conversely, the 7th indicator was rated low. Among the teacher-related-factors, only item 1 was established to be of very high impact and the rest posed to be highly impactful.

In the subset of personal factors, feeling sleepy in class in class was rated to be of highest impact. The indicator 'I feel tired, bored and sleepy.' was determined to have the highest impact among study habits. Meanwhile, among the home-related aspects, 'I live far from school' was found to be the most impactful. The indicator 'the time schedule is followed' was determined to have the greatest effect among the school-related items. Highest of impact among the five domains were the teacher-related factors.

**Table 3. Summary of the Set of Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Female Student Nurses**

	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Teacher-Related Aspect	2.928	LI
Study Habits	2.955	LI
School-Related Aspect	3.324	LI
Personal condition	2.762	LI
Home-Related Aspect	2.698	LI

Table 3 shows the summary of the factors affecting academic performance of female student nurses. The results show that the set of factors with the highest influence on the academic performance of student nurses are the School-Related Aspect with the highest mean. It is followed by study habits and teacher-related aspects, both equally rated as highly impactful. Conversely, the set of factors with low impacts are personal conditions and home-related aspects.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of undergraduate nursing education is to help students in acquiring the unique knowledge, skills and attitudes of the profession (Cronenwett *et al.*, 2007). During the process of teaching, students form perception of their professional role. These perceptions are known as a professional or nurse self concept (Cowin, *et al.*, 2006). So, the current study was carried out in an attempt to determine factors affecting the academic performance among female nursing students in Saudi Arabia. The current study revealed that most of nursing students had age from 19 to 21 years. Also the majority of the nursing students were single. However, two third of them have five to seven family members size. While, the most of nursing students have middle social class. Furthermore, two third of the nursing students have satisfied from academic program. Similar study conducted by kamel *et al.*, (2015) reported that near two thirds of students (62.5%) age from 19-20 and 79.5% of them lives with their parents. Also, large number of them (80.5%) have middle social class while Pedrosa, (2006) shows that the highest percentage of respondents (almost 74%) were aged between 21 to 25 years, and the least number of respondents (less than four percent) were below 20 years of age. On the same line, Elbsuony (2016) highlighted that the total number of study sample was 239 majority of nursing students (86.2%) were single. Also Dills (2006) shows that academic performance is dependent on parents' social economic status. That is students from high social economic backgrounds will perform better than their counter parts from low social economic backgrounds as discussed. Moreover, Rongstand (2002) who found that family income has a profound influence on the educational opportunities available to adolescents and on their chances of educational success. low-income students usually attend schools with lower funding levels, have reduced achievement motivation and much higher risk of educational failure. Also Milisen *et al.* (2010) who revealed that the nursing educational program can be

considered as a predictor for professional nursing self image. According to academic levels of nursing students, the present study reported that third level represented 28.8%, six level 20% but fifth level represented only 9.8%. The present results agreed with Elbsuony (2016) reported that the study sample distribution according to their academic levels, second level represented 25.5%, six level 19.7% but third level represented only 6.3%. Also Eamon, (2005) found that the highest percentage of respondents were third year students (over 39%) and the least number of respondents were the fourth year students who were almost 7% of the respondents. In present study majority of nursing students were free from chronic diseases, and premenstrual syndrome, 64.3% not practicing exercise, and 47.3% sleep from 4-6 hour, and 39.5% of them study from 4-6 hours. (66.8%) have meals less than 3 meals per day. Also most of the study group have Excellent GPA. This goes in line with Elbsuony (2016) who clarified that the total number of study sample was 239 majority of them (94.1%) were free from chronic diseases, 66.9% not practicing exercise. Another study conducted by Kamel *et al.* (2015) who noticed that more than half of students (53%) sleep from 4-6 hours every and 39.5% of them study from 4-6 hours. Furthermore, less than half (45.5%) of the students have average academic score. This is agreed with Arne *et al.* (2010) who stated that findings of a small number of his population sleep less than 4 hours. Research shows that people who sleep seven hours a night do better on memory tasks than those who do not. This is supported by previous research conducted by Ross, (2010) who found the nutrition plays an important role in the body's ability, the mind ability to growth and the performance of our potential education capacity.

The current study revealed that the highest mean was 'feeling sleepy in class' with high impact. Meanwhile, the indicator with the lowest mean was 'difficulty in breathing' which was found to have the lowest influence on the academic performance of the student nurses. This also was asserted by (Wolfson and Carskadon, 1998) who stressed that sleep way in teenagers seriously affect their thinking, feelings and their behaviors during the day. Another study was conducted by Fredriksen *et al.* (2004) reported that the effects of adolescent sleep loss during middle school, also he found relation between low grades, decrees self-esteem, high depressive symptom and participants who do not take enough sleep. These findings are in harmony with the present study's findings. In the same factor 'Feeling hungry in class' (3.215) came at the second item of having effect on student performance. Moreover, Al Ghamdi, (2013) who noticed that the association between insufficient sleep duration and lower university grades are understandable in the lifestyle. view of sleep functions, as sleep deprivation may negatively affects the ability to complete cognitive tasks. Also Sunshine *et al.* (2015) reported that feeling sleepy in class deemed to be the most impactful on academic performance among the personal conditions category.

According to the findings of the study habits section, all are found to be highly impactful with the indicator 'I study only when there is a quiz' having the highest mean. One indicator though was determined to belong to the lower range, the item 'I copy the assignments of friends'. This agreement with Alami, (2016) who said that "There could be many reasons for students' boredom such as, untouchable topics to read or write and mismatch between students' current level of knowledge and the presented material in the classroom". 'I study only

when there is a quiz'. Moreover, Cerna and Pavliushchenko, (2015) who stressed that high performing students study in calm and lonely most of the time, the study at consistent intervals along the whole semester, write note in lecture and through the study, ask questions in class and read the lecture before the class. These finding is in line with Kornell and Bjork's (2008) suggest that only about 2/3 of college students routinely quiz themselves, and a majority of students study only one time for upcoming exams. also Markman (2012) discovered that among factors related to study habits; the indicator 'I only study when there is a quiz' came out as the most impactful. Moreover Kornell and Bjork, (2007) found that one of the most important tips is that students should study by testing themselves rather than just reading over the material. It is also important to study over a period of days rather waiting until the last minute to study. Another study was conducted by Zarei (2008) revealed that the more frequently students were exposed to quizzes; the better their performance appeared to be. Moreover, the results showed that the administration of frequent quizzes had a positive correlation with classroom attendance. Regarding all home-related factors were discovered to have a low influence on student nurses' academic performance. The indicator with the highest mean in this subset was 'I live far from school' and the indicator with the lowest mean was 'I have many brothers and sisters'. These findings in accordance with Caranto & David, (2015) who found that 'I live far from school' item has highest mean (3.18). On the same line Meenu (2016) recommended this result indicates that the home or family structure has a great influence on the students' academic achievement. It is generally reported that the un-conducive home environment reduces the possibilities of learning capabilities. As shown in the analysis, home environment of students is significantly correlated with the academic achievement.

Among the school-related factors, all indicators fell in the range of high impact with the indicator 'the time schedule is followed' posing as the most impactful. One indicator, 'location of classrooms', was found to belong to the low impact range. This goes in line with Usaini and Abu bakar, (2015) who supported and said "Students need school with favorable learning facilities to perform well. This means that when school environment is enriched with modern educational facilities is facilitate learning". Also Ali *et al.* (2009) approved that performance of the students is also influenced by the school in which they studied; however, he also asserted that the number of facilities a school offers usually determine the quality of the school, which in turn affect the performance and accomplishment of its students. In addition to education of Dimkpa *et al.* (2013) who reported that the schools influence educational process in content organization, teacher and teaching learning and in the end evaluation of all. All these educationists and researchers agreed with the principle that schools put strong effect on academic performance and educational attainment of students.

As regard the teacher-related aspects, the item 'teacher has mastery of the subject matter' had the greatest mean with a very high impact. The rest of the indicators were deemed to be of high impact with the indicator 'teacher is always late' having the lowest mean. This result coincided with Bangbade (2004) who stressed that the teachers' attribute have significant relationship with students' academic performance. Such attributes include teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, communication ability, emotional stability, good human

relationship and interest in the job. This is in support of the study's findings by Sunshine *et al.* (2015) who show that teacher-related factors were deemed to be the most impactful category of factors that pose an impact on student nurses' academic performance. Also Ryan (2000) explained that for students to perform well in any examination one of the prerequisites is that their teachers must know them and have profound knowledge of their state of physical, intellectual and psychological readiness. Teachers' effectiveness has been accepted as a multidimensional construct since it measures a variety of different aspects of teaching such as: subject mastery, effective communication, lesson preparation and presentation

## Conclusion

Based from the findings, it was concluded that several factors pose a high impact on the academic performance of student nurses, with School-Related factors topping the list. Among the five (5) domains, study habits and teacher-related factors fall behind the School-related factors. Nonetheless, both categories are still deemed to be highly impactful. Conversely, personal conditions and home-related factors pose little effect on student nurses' academic performance. Thus students should find solutions that improve their performance also, parents should help their children to improve academic performance by provide needed encouragement.

## Recommendation

- Teachers should use varied strategies in teaching to help students improving their academic performance.
- The collage administration should ensure availability of adequate environment with library and internet facilities to encourage the students learning.
- The nursing student should know effective ways to study, how to manage their time effective and proper lifestyle to achieve good academic performance.
- The study should be replicated in different colleges and regions.

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