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An explorative study on factors affecting nursing student's academic failure

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Abstract

Introduction: Academic failure among nursing students has become a phenomenon of interest, as it does not limit itself to only financial consequences, but also compromises the nurse's availability in the health care sector in the future. Quality of education becomes important as nurses admit and graduate every year in various universities. **Objectives:** The objectives of the study were to assess factors affecting academic failure among nursing students and to find the association between factors affecting nursing student's academic failure and selected demographic variables. **Methods:** A descriptive explorative design was used for the study among 100 nursing students studying in the Father Muller College of Nursing, Mangaluru. Purposive sampling technique was used and assessed using Rating Scale. **Result:** Majority of the students (41%) belonged to the age group of 20-22 years, where 82% of the students were hostiliers and belonged to middle-class family and 63% of the students got first class in the exams. Factors affecting the students' academic failure, was highest in the area of family related (73.13%) followed by teacher related (70.82%), personal (67.87%), college (67.65%), spiritual (67.06%), study habits (61.02%), exam (60.4%), subject (57.43%) and the least was in the area of university related (52.88%). There is no significant association between factors affecting students' academic failure and selected demographic variables. **Conclusion:** Majority of the students agree that family related factors affected the most.

Key words: Academic failure, factors, nursing students, students

Introduction

Academic failure is considered when the performance falls below a specific standard. Academic failure occurs where the primary aim of education fails to deliver the learning ability of the student to the extent that it gets compromised. There are broad ranges of causes that have been studied. A student who fails to achieve his or her potential or does not do as well as expected is termed as an underachiever (Dante et al., 2016).

A recent systematic review focused on factors contributing to academic failure among BSc courses in

different organizations in the context of education with the concern that maximum failures among students were during their first-year course. It was recommended that identification of predictors of early failure and appropriate measures to be taken up to prevent failures (Dante, et al., 2016).

There were mainly two academic outcomes in the form of success and failures among nursing students enrolled, which represented two sides of a coin. Academic success or failure for a nursing student has been defined as the student's ability to graduate within the stipulated duration of time frame as per the program plan (Najimi, Sharifirad, Amini & Meftagh, 2013).

A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted to investigate the factors contributing to academic failure in the Isfahan University of Medical Sciences among 280 students, selected using multiple cluster sampling and data was collected using reliable questionnaire. The study found that in the student's view point the crucial

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factors affecting educational failure included; factors related to educator (3.88 ± 0.55), socio-economic factors (3.45 ± 0.69), curriculum (4.23 ± 0.63), family factors (3.53 ± 0.6) and learning environment (3.63 ± 0.62). Significant relationship was found between attitudes of students and demographic variables like socio-economic environment ($p = .003$) and educator ($p = .03$). The study concluded stating that the student's academic failure can be prevented by focussing on the factors related to educator, curriculum and learning environment (Najimi, Sharifirad, Amini & Meftagh, 2013).

A case control study was conducted to identify academic failure factors in region II medical universities of Semnan, Mashhad, Gorgan, Shahroud, Sabzevar, Gonabad and Bojnurd in 2009. Screening of 10,714 students was done of which 485 students who had suffered an academic failure were selected. Data was collected using a validated questionnaire. The study results revealed that the frequency of academic failure in men was higher than women ($N = 620$, 5.33%). There was a correlation between the academic failure and sex ($p=.002\%$). Academic failure was the highest among the undergraduate students ($N = 620$, 5.79%) and was the least among the PhD and the MPH students (0.13%, $N = 14$). The study concluded stating that academic failure was more prevalent in students with bachelor and associate degree and recommended to hold study skill workshops for all students, including students with academic failure to learn the correct ways to study and work on techniques to improvise memory for better results (Hazavehei, Fathei, & Shamshirei, 2002).

Academic failure impacts negatively to students in terms of both availability of nursing workforce and faculty, when occurring as early as during the first year or later. Therefore, the global concern for shortage of nurses largely depends on academic failure, thus measures should be taken up to discover effective strategies to tackle avoidable failures, so that students can progress to academic success.

Objectives

1. To assess factors affecting academic failure among nursing students; and
2. To find the association between factors affecting nursing student's academic failure and selected demographic variables.

Material and methods

A descriptive explorative design was used. The study was conducted in Father Muller College of Nursing, Mangaluru using a purposive sampling technique to select 100 BSc, PBBSc and MSc nursing students. Students who have failed at least once in nursing course exams or tests were selected.

Tool description: Tool consisted of baseline pro forma with eight items such as age, religion, type of family, year of study, course of study, residence, family income status and previous academic status and rating scale consisted of 73 multiple choice question on factors affecting nursing student's academic failure with a five point rating scale and reliability was found to be 0.9. Blueprint of the rating scale comprized of nine areas; personal (67.87%), spiritual related (67.06%), family related (73.13%), study habits (61.02%), subject related (57.43%), teacher related (70.82%), college related (67.65%), university related (52.88%) and exam related (60.4%) respectively.

Data collection process: The main study was conducted on 29 June 2016 in the Father Muller College of Nursing, Mangaluru. Formal permission was obtained from the concerned authorities before the data collection, the investigator introduced her and the purpose of the study was explained to the subjects. Informed consent was obtained from the participants. The baseline pro forma and rating scale on factors affecting nursing student's academic failure was given to the subjects and the filled questionnaires were collected back. The data collection was terminated by thanking the subjects for their participation and co-operation. The data collected was compiled for analysis.

Results

Table 1:
Distribution of Subjects According to Demographic Data

N=100		
Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age in years		
17 – 19	20	20
20 – 22	41	41
23 – 30	21	21
>30	18	18

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Religion		
Hindu	7	7
Muslim	0	0
Christian	92	92
Any other	1	1
Type of family		
Joint	13	13
Nuclear	87	87
Year of course of study		
First	40	40
Second	29	29
Third	8	8
Fourth	23	23
Course of study		
BSc	63	63
PBBSc	21	21
MSc	16	16
Residence		
Hostel/PG	82	82
Home	18	18

Data in table 1, figure 1 & 2 depicts the demographic background of the study sample.

Family income status

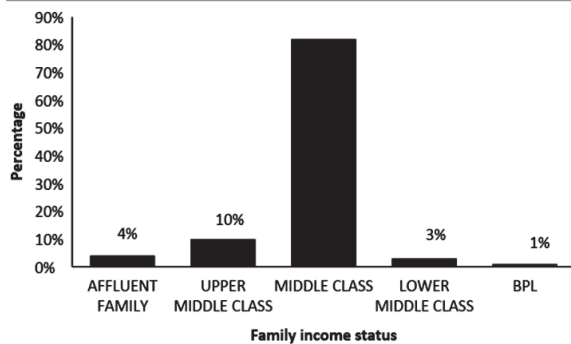


Figure 1: Bar diagram representing the family income status

Previous academic status

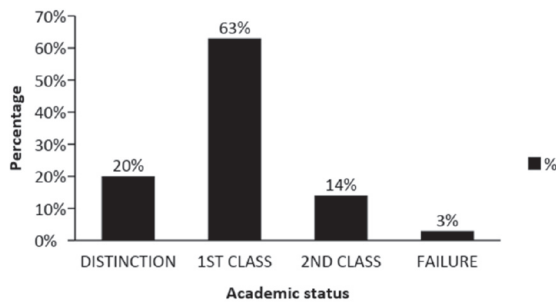


Figure 2: Bar diagram representing the previous academic status

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and Mean Percentage as per the Ranking of Factors Affecting Nursing Students' Academic Failure

Area	Maximum score	Mean ±SD	Mean percentage
Family	30	21.94 ± 3.45	73.13
Teacher	50	35.41 ± 4.61	70.82
Personal	85	57.69 ± 7.21	67.87
College	35	23.68 ± 2.89	67.65
Spiritual	15	10.06 ± 1.79	67.06
Study habits	50	30.51 ± 4.73	61.02
Exam	30	18.12 ± 2.75	60.40
Subject	30	17.23 ± 3.17	57.43
University	35	18.51 ± 3.07	52.88

Mean percentage of factors affecting nursing student's academic failure

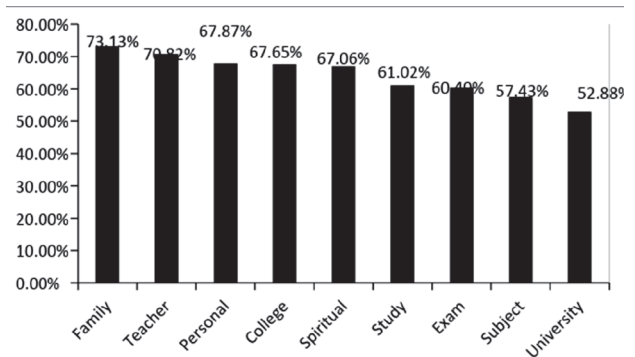


Figure 3: Bar diagram showing mean percentage of ranking of factors affecting nursing students' academic failure.

Data in table 2 and figure 3 presents the mean percentage of ranking of factors affecting nursing students' academic failure.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Rating Scale on Factors Affecting Nursing Students' Academic Failure

Areas	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Personal	22.17	29.23	18.6	19.1	8.35
Spiritual	33	20	13	13.33	19
Family	36.83	24.33	14.33	10	11
Study	10.7	27.3	21.6	23.5	11.4
Subject	8.66	24.66	21.5	30.33	12
Teacher	8.1	35.72	26.09	19.27	5.45
College	13	41.71	19	17	6
University	3.28	25.85	21.14	26.14	20.42
Exam	5	31.66	27.33	28	6.16

Data presented in table 3 depicts the most common factors affecting nursing students' academic failure.

Table 4:
Association Between Demographic Variables and Factors Affecting Nursing Student's Academic Failure

Variable	χ^2	df	P value
Age	1.888	3	.596
Religion	1.147	2	.564
Type of family	0.140	1	.708
Year of study	1.439	3	.697
Course	1.786	2	.409
Residence	0.377	1	.539
Family income	2.343	4	.673
Academic status	4.190	3	.242

Table 4 shows that the p value was more than .05. Hence, the study concluded that there was no association between the factors affecting the nursing students' academic failure and the baseline variables such as age, religion, type of family, year of study, course of the study, residence, family income status and previous academic status.

Discussion

Sabet, Ghavami, and Hesam (2015) conducted a study to identify the factors in the viewpoint of students on academic failure in the Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. In this study, among 280 students, 47.1% were female and 52.9% were male, respectively, with a mean age of 22.12 ± 3.7 years. Among them, 238 were BSc, 145 were MD, 99 were associate degree, two were MSc and one was a PhD student. Dormitory dwellers were 68.6%, living with their parents were 29.6% and those living in rental house contributed to 1.8%. Calculated mean of learning facilities, communication, family stress and guidance was 4.2597, 4.1626, 4.28172 and 4.1462, respectively. Degree of association was found between guidance, family stress and learning facilities with students' performance at 20%, 2% and 13% respectively.

Seyed, Zenab, Nasram and Teymor in 2012 studied factors affecting the academic failure and impact of the socio-economic factors on the academic inhibition of high school male students in Babol. Teachers and high school male students, 180 in number were selected and evaluated randomly. Attitude questionnaire was introduced for collection of data and two independent means were compared using a t-test and the average

of t . It was concluded that socio-economic factors moderately affected the performance of students and no significant difference between the mean scores of successful and unsuccessful students was noted in relation to educational inhibition factors (Seyed, Zenab, Nasram, & Teymor, 2012).

Yousaf, Zahoor and Sadia in 2013 studied factors influencing the academic failure of university students. The study attempted to investigate factors contributing to the academic failures among university students. Data was collected from 100 drop out students using a questionnaire. The data was analyzed using independent sample t-test to compare the means for two groups and the relationship among the latent factor was tested using a structural equation modelling analysis. The study revealed that male and female were different in their perception of academic failure however, program wise there was no significant difference found. Lack of family support was also known to affect drop out from universities and choosing wrong subjects and system change was associated with the class participation and student drop out (Yousaf, Zahoor, & Sadia, 2013).

Mohammad, Hussein, and Abdol Hussein in 2008 conducted a study on the factors affecting the student's academic failure in Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences. Subjects included 100 failed and 100 non-failed students from whom data was collected using questionnaires. Data was analyzed using SPSS software. Finding of the study included that male and married students had more drop outs when compared to others. Their background included high school education from villages, lower average scores, increased gap between high school diploma and university studies, less educated parents and low-class occupations. Dropped students also had altered mental health and experienced tensions due to stay and educational situations. The study also stressed upon authorities taking up appropriate strategies to identify students at risk and helped the students to overcome their inhibitions to achieve academic success and better satisfaction (Mohammad, Hussein, Abdol Hussein, 2008).

In the present study, majority of the students (41%) belonged to the age of 20-21 years, 87% belonged to the nuclear family, where 40% were from the first

years, 63% were from BSc nursing students, 82% were hoteliers belonged to the middle-class family and most of the students i.e. 63% got first class in the previous academic year exams. Factors affecting nursing student's academic failure ranked highest in the area of family related (73.13%) followed by teacher related (70.82%), personal (67.87%), college (67.65%), spiritual (67.06%), study habits (61.02%), exam related (60.4%), subject related (57.43%) and were the least in the area of university related (52.88%). There was no association between factors affecting student's academic failure and their demographic variables like age, religion, type of family, year of study, course of the study, residence, family income status and previous academic status ($p < .05$).

Conclusion

The study concluded that factors affecting students' academic failure were highest in the area related to family followed by those related to teacher and the least was in the area related to university. Nurse-educators have an important role to identify risk of academic failures and help the students overcome them effectively through goal directed strategies.

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