

## Reflections of Nursing Students' Perceptions Toward Factors Influencing Their Academic Performance

Faiza A. Abou El-Soud<sup>1</sup> Wafaa Gassim AlKharasi<sup>2</sup> Al-Bandari Awad Alfaouri<sup>2</sup> Eman Said Al-enzi<sup>2</sup>  
1.Asst. Prof. Community Health Nursing, College of Nursing- Riyadh, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Saudi Arabia  
1.Asst. Prof. Community Health Nursing, College of Nursing- Menoufiya University-Egypt  
2.Undergraduate Nursing Students, College of Nursing- Riyadh, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Saudi Arabia  
PO box 3660 Riyadh 11481

### Abstract

The students' academic performance is one of the most imperative component in all universities to make sure in delivering the best quality graduates who will set out to be extraordinary pioneer and employees who have a positive reflection on the nation's financial growth and social advancement of the national and international area. Thus, the current study aimed to describe nursing students' perceptions toward factors influencing academic performance. A quantitative descriptive-design was conducted with a convenience sample of 150 female nursing students in the third and fourth academic year, college of nursing, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Riyadh-Kingdom Saudi Arabia. A self-reporting questionnaire was used to collect the data from the respondents. The results of the study showed that the "learner – related" subscale on the success factor scale was rated as 1<sup>st</sup> rank. "Regular attendance at lecture" item was attained the highest  $M \pm SD$  score ( $3.95 \pm 0.22$ ), with high influence (UI) on the academic performance of the respondents. Meanwhile, "Reading beyond prescribed material" item was obtained the lowest  $M \pm SD$  score ( $2.84 \pm 1.44$ ) with low influence (LI). Similarly, on the failure factor scale, the "learner- related" subscale was taken 1<sup>st</sup> ranked. Moreover, "lack of attendance at lecture" item was occupied the highest  $M \pm SD$  score ( $3.73 \pm 0.443$ ) as well as "lack of interest in the course" item was stated the lowest  $M \pm SD$  score ( $1.88 \pm 2.40$ ). As a result of this study, "learner-related factor" was employed the first rank in both success and failure scales and most of the learner-related items have a greater impact on the students' academic performance. So, this study recommended to administrators, lecturers, academic advisors to carry out more studies on students' academic performance factors, with specific focus on the ways which provide the students with the important skills which help them to overcome and manage these factors which contributed to their academic performance negatively.

**Keywords:** Reflections, Nursing Students' Perceptions, Academic Performance, Success, Failure, Influencing Factors

### 1. Introduction

In today's competitive world education is a necessity for all mankind, because it is the only education which preparing students to learn, promote healthy behaviors, values, awareness and interacting and navigating with excellence. Based on that, all universities and colleges as an academic community play a crucial role to maintain the quality of the students' performance through their achievement of the educational outcomes and make sure that every student in this community, is relied upon to perceive and respect measures of academic and intellectual integrity through positive learning environment that energize positive social communication, dynamic engagement in learning, and self-inspiration, increase quality of the student's overall academic performance<sup>(1,2)</sup>. Because of the students' academic performance is the one of the most imperative part in all universities, therefore delivering the best quality graduates who will get to be extraordinary pioneer and employees who have the positive reflection on the nation's financial growth and social advancement.<sup>(3,4,5)</sup>

According to Al-Mutairi (2011) and Annie et al.,(1996) pointed out that academic achievement is defined as the outcome of the federal, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals and objectives.<sup>(6,7)</sup> Academic achievement is commonly measured by examination or continuous assessment grades that earned by the student and issued by the faculty, but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important.<sup>(8)</sup> Similarly, Galiher (2006) and Darling (2005) reported that student academic performance can be measured by several methods, like Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), or Grade Point Average (GPA). Most common method used around the world was GPA to measure the student performance for the specific semester. In addition, some other researchers measure student performance through the result of a particular subject or the previous year result.<sup>(9,10,11)</sup>

The factors affecting students' academic performance is not a new area for investigation, but there are several studies have been carried out to identify these factors that affect academic performance of the students in a number of educational institutions worldwide. There is a scope of elements that affect on the quality of performance of students that intervene and categorized in various ways as parents, teachers, personnel, and peer

–related factors.<sup>(12,13)</sup> In the other hand, many researches categorized these factors as internal and external classroom factors; or inside and outside school factors; or academic as teachers - causal factors, students- causal factors, and learning facilities-causal factors and non-academic factors as family-causal factors, and health-related factors.<sup>(6,14)</sup> Several studies found that there are series of variables which to be considered when to identify the influencing factors towards quality of academic success, and some post enrollment factors that strongly influence success such as motivation; students' approach to studying; cultural expectations; psychological factors; student's academic literacy; students' time management skills; peer culture; the quality of teaching; students' belief in their own ability and student support structures offered by the university.<sup>(14)</sup>

On the other hand, Womble, (2003) pointed out that qualities such as empathy and social skills, communication skills, conflict management, leadership, collaboration, cooperation, and team capabilities are important in the practice environment.<sup>(15)</sup> Nevertheless, Ajewole and Okebukola, (2000) observed that a number of factors have contributed to students' poor academic achievement which may include: poor study habits, lack of available resource material, poor school climate, indiscipline, inadequate facilities, teachers' ineffectiveness, the teaching method and the type of learning environment available for both students and teachers.<sup>(16)</sup>

In this study, the primary goal of the researcher was to identify nursing students' perceptions toward factors influencing academic performance. Although several studies have identified the factors which influencing students' academic performance, but still the results have been differences in the level of these factors among students' academic performance due to different academic environment to another, from one set of students to another, and also from one cultural setting to another.<sup>(17)</sup> Therefore, this research was aimed to explore these differences by understanding of what students perceive as the highly influential on their academic success or failure factors; which set of these factors related has the highest impact on the students' academic performance; what is the highest factor in each set has an impact on the students' academic performance.

### **1.1. Significance of the problem**

Indeed, as it was, students' academic performance is a product of socioeconomic, psychological and environmental factors. Unfortunately, defining and measuring the determinants of students' academic performance is not a simple issue and the complexity of this process that upsurges justifiably among researchers to conduct such this study to explore more different students' perceptions of what are the factors which will enhance their chance of success or decrease rate of failure at college or university.<sup>(15,18)</sup> On the other hand, such this specific results have a great practical implications for helping universities and colleges when developing programs and support services to be more cognizant regarding the success and failure factors which have a prodigious influence on the students' academic performance. For the teachers, this study may help them to perceive the issues experienced by the students that may represent an impact on their academic performance and may discover alternative solutions on the best way to handle their students. With this current study's understanding, the students' perception that may help them in changing their state of mind to be aware of the success and failure factors that can affect directly on their academic performance and they will perform well for next semester in the event that they got to be mindful of the achievement and disappointment components. For the parents, they can use the results of the study by determining their students' academic issues and support them and they can share with the teachers and the administrators in making the decision to discover an answer to their children's problems and to avoid exposure to the same issue in the next semesters. Lastly, the findings of this study will act as a reference for whole universities, colleges, students, teachers, and parents in understanding the success factors which enhancing the students' academic performance (academic achievement) and also will stimulate the other researchers to focus on the failure factors and develop a new alternative strategies to reduce their negative impact on the students' performance.

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Success in the educational process is measured by the quality of the student's academic performance or achievement, therefore the most obvious territories of performance of universities and colleges is the degree to which they can able to educate students who are equipped for having a constructive outcome at national, and international levels.

Due to the lack of literature and documents in this area of the research study in Kingdom Saudi Arabia, this research paper sought to describe senior nursing students' perceptions toward the factors that influencing their academic performance.

### **1.3. Conceptual framework**

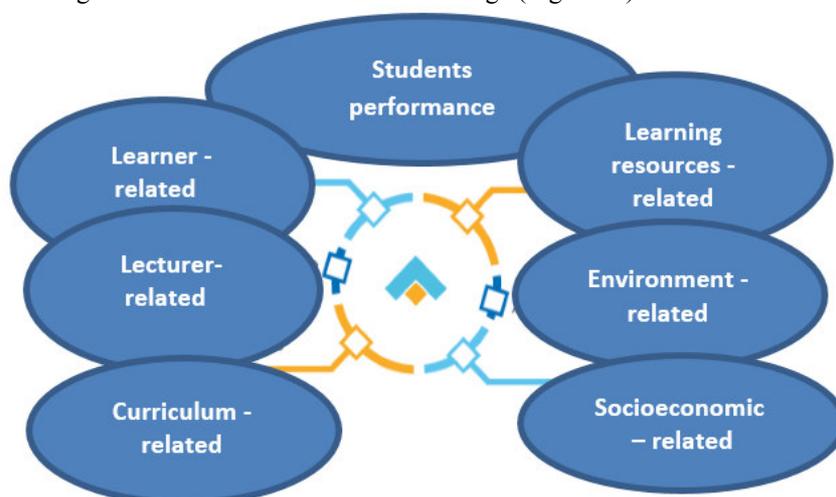
According to Jeffreys, (2007a ) the concept of retention and success may appear to be straightforward and dichotomous (success or failure; retention or attrition); be that as it may, it is more intricate and a few directions, pathways exist out and about from passage into a nursing program to exit and then entry into the workforce for a coveted nursing role.<sup>(21)</sup>

A dichotomous view is limited open doors for enhancing outcomes, and breaking points conceivable outcomes for the accomplishment of pinnacle execution potential. Despite the fact that the coveted direction, pathway prompts post-graduation outcomes of employment in beginning or advanced nursing roles, the nature of partial execution might be very various. Regardless of the post-graduation nursing responsibility, streamlining outcomes eventually benefits nursing, healthcare, and society at large.<sup>(19)</sup>

In addition, Jeffreys's Nursing Universal Retention and Success model (NURS) model (2013) is present as a globally applicable organizing framework for examining the multidimensional factors that affect nursing student retention and success in order to identify at-risk students, develop diagnostic-descriptive strategies to facilitate success, guide innovations in teaching and educational research, and evaluate strategy effectiveness.<sup>(20)</sup>

It additionally intends to give a framework for connecting faculty and researchers worldwide in sharing, exchange, disseminating research findings, and empowering, collaborative partnerships that rise above geographic boundaries and join in the shared objective of enhancing student retention and success. In light of a survey of the higher education and nursing literature, a series of single-site and multi-site studies on nursing student retention, earlier versions of the NURS model (Jeffreys, 2012a, 2012b), various solicitations from instructors around the globe, and the proceeds to request consideration regarding this subject universally distinguished the need to examine and extend the model.<sup>(21,22)</sup>

Based on the NURS model, the current study creates a theoretical framework to show the multidimensional factors that affect nursing student success as well as failure stage (Figure -1).



**Figure (1) . Theoretical Framework**

## 2. Research Purpose

The main purpose of the study was to describe nursing students' perceptions toward factors influencing the academic performance.

### 2.1. Research questions:

In this study, the researcher sought to deliver answers to the following research questions :

- Q1.** What is the level of influence of the different success factors on the academic performance of nursing students?
- Q2.** Which subscale and item of success factors has the highest influence on the academic performance of nursing students?
- Q3.** What is the level of influence of the different failure factors on the academic performance of nursing students?
- Q4.** Which subscale and item of failure factors has the highest influence on the academic performance of nursing students?

## 3. Materials and Methods

### 3.1. Research design and setting:

A quantitative descriptive design was used to describe nursing students' perceptions toward factors influencing their academic performance, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Nursing College- Riyadh (CON-R), Saudi Arabia. This CON-R is one of the Saudi nursing colleges that offers a bachelor degree in nursing (BSN) and master degree in midwifery. For BSN, the first two years of the curriculum are pertaining mainly to pre-professional education shared by other health sciences students, whereas the second two years are

pertaining to professional nursing education.

### 3.2. Sample and sampling:

A convenience sample of 150 students who fulfill the inclusion criteria to participate in the research. The inclusion criteria were female, nursing students in the third and fourth year as years of professional nursing education where they are studying both theory and clinical nursing subjects regularly; and willing to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria were students who are registered in the first and second year as years of pre-professional nursing education because in this period these students not having nursing subjects, so they were not having experience in nursing to reflect their perception toward the factors influencing their academic performance; and students who have psychological problems.

### 3.3. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted on thirteen students where (6) students were selected from third year and (7) students from fourth year to test tools feasibility and applicability of the questionnaire. Appropriate modifications were done before data collection for the actual study.

### 3.4. Ethical Consideration:

This study was conducted after the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of King Abdullah International Medical Research Center (KAIMRC). All respondents were fully informed regarding the purpose and procedures of the research, potential risks and benefits associated with their participation, voluntary participation in the study, the right of withdrawal from the research without penalty, and the confidentiality and security of personal data.

### 3.5. Data Collection and Variables Measurement

A self-reporting questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The instruments were included in two parts. The first part was concerned with sociodemographic characteristics of students' age, gender, nationality, marital status, admission qualification i.e., GPA in the secondary school, current level of English language skills and English barriers and GPA of the last semester. The second part was concerned with success and failure scales. In this study, the researchers adopted an almost similar set of the success and failure scale in different contexts. The success scale was categorized into four subscales and thirty-eight items and failure scale involved of six subscales and forty - one item. These scales were ranked on a four point Likert scale ranging from (1) Not influential; (2) Slightly influential; (3) Fairly influential; (4) Very influential.

### 3.6. Scoring and Interpretation

In the present study, scoring of the success and failure factors ranged from 1 to 4. If the mean average score was 1 or 2 that indicating Low Influence (LI) and if the mean average score was 3 or 4 that indicating to High Influence (HI).

According to King Saud bin Abdul -aziz University for Health Sciences policy, Nursing College is measured the semester GPA as out of five and grading system is described as follows: Exceptional (5=A+), Excellent (4.75=A), Superior (4.5= B+), Very good (4 = B), Above average (3.5 = C+), Good (3 = C), High pass (2.5 = D+), Pass (2 = D), and Fail (1= F).

### 3.7. Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

This success and failure questionnaire was validated by Killen's study 1994<sup>(23)</sup> and adopted by many researchers in other studies as Fraser and Killen, 2003,2005; Zulu, 2008; Zhang and Aasheim, 2011; Lucky et al., 2015. This instrument, the internal consistency coefficient of success attribution scale that consists of 38 items was (.927); while internal consistency coefficient of failure attribution scale that consists of 41 items was (.933). In the current study, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was carried out for the success and failure scale to measure internal reliability between the items of each subscale.<sup>(14,24,25,26,27,28)</sup>

### 3.8. Data Analysis:

The collected data were coded and analyzed using SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 20, Inc, Chicago, Illinois, USA).<sup>(29)</sup> Descriptive analysis represents the calculated frequency, mean, and standard deviation for the dependent variable (students' performance) and independent variables (success and failure factors and demographic characteristics).

## 4. Results

Table (1) shows the respondents' ages ranged from 20 to 23 years old, with a mean age of (21.64 ± .890) years. All the respondents were females and Saudi nationality. Only 1.3 % of the study sample were married. In

addition, the percentage of the study sample in the third year was 52.7 % and in the fourth year was 47.3 %. Additionally, more than half of the respondents (57.3%) was reported that they are good in English language but still 38 % of them had an English barrier. The majority of the respondents (78.7%) obtained a GPA ( $\leq 90$  % in the secondary school) as an admission qualification before joining nursing college. Meanwhile, (71.3%) of the respondents had a GPA of (B & B+) in the last previous semester in the nursing college, and (14.7%) had a GPA of (C & C+).

The study result was displayed in Table (2), the success scale shown to be highly reliable with total score (.902). A coefficient of (.85) was found for the 21 items for the "learner-related" subscale ; (.82) was revealed for the 11 items for the lecturer –related subscale; (.55) was presented for 5 items in the "learning –resources related" subscale; and (.10) was exhibited for the 1 item for the curriculum –related subscale.

Meanwhile table (3) indicates to the failure scale is highly reliable with total score (.914). A coefficient of (0.87) for 24 items for learner -related subscale ; (.85) was shown for the 5 items for the curriculum – related subscale; (.79) was reported for 4 items for lecturer – related subscale ; (.67) was noticed for 4 items for the learning – resources related subscale; (.43) was remarked for 3 items for socioeconomic - related subscale ; and (.098) was stated for 1 item for the environment –related subscale .

In table 4, the findings show how the nursing students perceive the success factors. On the other hand, ranking the mean of each item from the highest to the lowest score to reflect the potential impact of each item on the academic performance.

*Learner-related factor:* The students' response indicates that “Regular attendance at lecture” item was occupied the highest mean score ( $3.95 \pm 0.22$ ), with high impact on the academic performance of the respondents. Meanwhile, the value with the lowest mean was ( $2.84 \pm 1.44$ ) for “Reading beyond prescribed material” with the low impact on the academic performance.

*Lecturer – related factor:* As regards “Encouragement and Motivated lecturers ” item was attained the highest mean score ( $3.72 \pm 0.45$ ). In addition, the indicator with the lowest mean was ( $2.71 \pm 1.56$ ) proposed for “Information if class is cancelled” with low influence on their academic performance.

*Learning Resources factor:* The response of the students regarding to “Applicability of course contents of the lecturers’ notes and slides via blackboard learning” was indicated to have the highest mean value ( $3.22 \pm 1.05$ ) which had a high influence on their performance. Additionally, “ Use of library resource “ was signed the lowest mean ( $2.22 \pm 2.06$ ) with low influence on their academic performance.

*Curriculum – related factor:* The students' response toward the item of the “implementation of theory into practice was pointed out a high influence on their academic performance, with a high mean score ( $3.32 \pm 0.97$ ).

Similarly, table (5) revealed that the respondents responses to six subscales of the failure scale and its items. This response indicates how the nursing students perceive these failure factors and what is the level of influence on their academic performance. In addition, this table shown the ranking of the mean score of the failure factors items which prescribed from the highest score to the lowest score that reflect the level of potential impact of the different failure factors on the academic performance.

*Learner-related factor:* the student response towards learner – related subscale, the the highest mean score of was belongs to “Lack of attendance at lectures” with Mean  $\pm$  SD ( $3.73 \pm 0.44$ ). Meanwhile, the lowest mean was related to “Lack of interest in the course” at the mean score ( $1.88 \pm 2.40$ ).

*Curriculum – related factor:* Regarding to the curriculum – related subscale, “Too many demands on student’s time” has the highest mean value ( $3.79 \pm 0.48$ ) with high influence on the students’ academic performance. However, “not given the opportunity to explore own business ideas” did not have any impact and influence on the academic performance.

*Lecturer –related factor::* All the students' response towards the lecture –related factors indicate that " Lack of communication between the lecturer and student" was the first item with a mean score ( $2.96 \pm 1.31$ ) comparing with the other items within the subscale.

*Learning resources–related factor:* All items related to learning resources conceal a low impact on the students’ academic performance with low mean scores and low influence on the academic achievement.

*Socioeconomic-related factor:* the only item within socioeconomic related subscale, which contributed to academic performance was “unstable social challenges” with a low mean score ( $1.52 \pm 2.76$ ) and low impact on the students’ academic performance. But the other items of the same subscale not have any impact .

*Environment - related factor:* The students' response displayed that “ Noisy lecturing environment” item was contributed to the environment –related factors with a low mean score ( $1.23 \pm 3.05$ ) and low influence on their academic performance.

In table (6) indicates that the total mean of learner- related subscale was derived in the first rank with the highest score ( $3.43 \pm 0.85$ ). Meanwhile, the lecturer-related subscale was occupied the second rank with the mean score ( $3.11 \pm 1.15$ ), followed by the learning resources subscale as the third ranking with the mean score ( $2.84 \pm 1.43$ ) ; and lastly the curriculum – related subscale was the lowest mean score ( $2.60 \pm .83$ ).

In Table 7 the study findings show the learner – related subscale was highly contributed to the failure

factors scale as the first rank with the highest mean score ( $3.00 \pm 1.25$ ); while socioeconomic - related subscale was obtained the sixth ranking, which employed the lowest rank with the total mean score ( $0.51 \pm 0.92$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The results of the current study based on the interpretation of the success and failure scales. In each scale, there were numbers of subscales which reflect how the nursing students perceive these factors that might influence on their academic performance. In this study, the researchers were emphasized on the highest mean items which belonging to each subscale.

*Regular attendance at lectures:* The result of the present study found that "regular attendance at lecture" in success scale was obtained the first rank with the highest mean score and a high level of influence on the academic performance of the students. This finding was similar to another study that has administered the success scale which reported on "regular attendance at lecture" item has highest mean score ( $3.57 \pm 0.711$ ) and at the same time engaged in the 2<sup>nd</sup> rank (Lucky, Chus and Olumide, 2015).<sup>(28)</sup> In addition, the finding of the current study is parallel with previous study findings (Fraser and Killen, 2003) reported that "regular attendance at the lecture" has a high mean scores among the 1<sup>st</sup> year students and senior students as well as the lecturers (4.67;4.06; and 4.39) respectively, i.e., this reflects that the junior students placed more attention on class attendance than senior students because they felt that this item has a greater influence on their academic performance.<sup>(14)</sup> Other studies, (Zhang and Aasheim, 2011; and Steenkamp and Baard, 2009) revealed that the regular attendance at class was occupied a high ranking amid items of the learner – related.<sup>(26,30)</sup>

*Motivated and encouragement lecturer:* The majority of the students in the current study considered "motivated and encouragement lecturer" was taken the first rank with the highest mean score and high influence on their academic performance. This finding in the line with other studies (Fraser and Killen, 2003), reported that a higher mean score of the encouragement, motivation and support from lecturers from the 1<sup>st</sup> year students, senior students and lecturer (4.53; 4.10; 4.18).<sup>(14)</sup> On the other hand, the results of the present study agreement with other studies which describes that the motivated lecturers was attained the 7<sup>th</sup> ranking and with a high mean score ( $3.40 \pm 0.738$ ) (Lucky, Chus and Olumide, 2015).<sup>(28)</sup> This response from the students was indicated to this item was significant for them because they considered the motivated teacher who puts his efforts in the classroom to convey adequate information to them in order to develop their knowledge and skills which have a direct impact on the learner behavior in the most desirable and positive manner for achieving their learning goals.

*Applicability of course contents:* On the success factors, the results of this study, "applicability of course contents" was attained of the highest mean score. This finding was consistent with the findings of Lucky, Chus and Olumide, (2015) that confirmed that this item has a significantly higher mean score ( $3.39 \pm 0.765$ ) and ranked as the 11<sup>th</sup> factors within the scale.<sup>(28)</sup> In addition, Fraser and Killen,(2003) study focused on this item "applicability of course contents" which obtained high mean scores among 1<sup>st</sup> year students, senior students, and lecturer (4.12;4.18;4.05).<sup>(14)</sup> This analysis indicated to a great importance of this item for the junior and senior students rather the lecture because learning is more useful if the students applied what they learned vice versa learning is not valuable if the students forget what they have learned

*Implementation of theory into practice:* In the current study, this item with curriculum –related subscale was occupied a high mean score and a high impact on the students' academic performance. This finding was inconsistent with the previous findings of Lucky, Chus and Olumide, (2015) which reported "aligning theory and practice" has low percent and low impact on their academic performance.<sup>(27)</sup> In addition, this is confirmed by Fraser and Killen,(2003) who emphasized on this item "implementation of theory into practice" has a positive impact differences in the mean scores among 1<sup>st</sup> year students, senior students, and lecturer (4.13; 4.18; 3.97).<sup>(14)</sup> This analysis indicated to a great importance of this item for both the junior and senior students, the reason for this students' response was "alignment theory and practice" lead students to engage in the learning activities that optimize their chances to acquire more knowledge and skills which have a direct impact for enhancing their academic performance.

*Irregular attendance at lectures :* The results of the present study found that "lack of attendance at lecture" item within learner-related subscale of the failure factors was obtained the first rank with the highest mean score and a high level of influence on the academic performance of the nursing students. This finding was similar to other study that has administered the failure scale which reported on "lack of attendance at lecture" item on the students' performance with high mean scores ( $3.12 \pm 1.014$ ) and represented as 5<sup>th</sup> ranking among the other subitems (Lucky, Chus and Olumide, 2015).<sup>(28)</sup> In addition, this study finding reflected other study (Fraser and Killen, 2003) who reported that the positive impact of the "irregular attendance at lecture" on the students' academic performance when the results show the highest mean score of the 1<sup>st</sup> year students and senior students as well as the lecturers (4.46, 3.62; and 4.42) respectively, which indicate the importance of class attendance for the junior students comparing with the senior students because the Junior students not have the experience to obtain the information from the textbook or other learning resources like the senior students.<sup>(14)</sup>

*Too many demands on the student's time:* On the side of curriculum -related subscale of this study, "Too

many demands on the student's time" e.g, study , work , travel, and family were occupying the highest mean score and a high influence on the academic performance. This finding was dissimilar to the other findings (Lucky, Chus and Olumide,2015) which pointed out this item with low percent.<sup>(27)</sup> Meanwhile, Fraser & Killen, (2003) study was consistent with the current finding and declared the differences in the mean scores among 1<sup>st</sup> year students, senior students, and lecturers (4.28; 4.08; 3.74).<sup>(14)</sup> This analysis reflects the high influence of this item on the junior students more than senior students because many demands on the student's time lead to exposure to many stressor which impact on their academic performance directly.

*Lack of communication between students and lecturers:* Regarding to the lecturer –related subscale within the failure factors, the result of the current study stated that "Lack of communication between students and lecturers" was attained the highest mean score and a high level of influence on the academic performance of the nursing students. This finding was agreement with other study (Lucky, Chus and Olumide,2015) which found that "Lack of communication between students and lecturers" item has a high mean score ( $3.14 \pm 0.957$ ) and engaged in 4<sup>th</sup> rank.<sup>(28)</sup> Similarly, this finding was confirmed with the results of other study (Fraser and Killen, 2003) which demonstrated a comparison mean scores of " effective written communication skills " among the 1<sup>st</sup> year student and senior students as well as the lecturers (4.08; 4.11; 4.29) respectively, which indicate the importance of communication skills for the senior students and lecturer comparing with the junior students because they have previous experience to realize that communication skills have a greater influence on the achievement of the learning goals and academic performance.<sup>(14)</sup>

*Lack of resources, e.g., textbooks and computer at home :* With regard to failure scale, the item of "lack of resources" was employed a low mean score and low level of influence on the academic performance. This finding was supported by the findings of Lucky, Chus and Olumide, (2015) that reported a low percent.<sup>(27)</sup> This analysis indicates that the students in the current study have infrastructure facilities at university to acquire sufficient knowledge in their field and a place them in the suitable atmosphere, sufficient library and clinical skills laboratory for training which provide more support to enhance their academic achievement.

*Unstable social challenges :* This study findings showed the "Unstable social challenges", e.g, live far from school don't live with my parents, and have big number of family members was the only item gained response within socioeconomic –related subscale and presented, a low mean score and low level of influence on the academic performance. This finding was supported by other findings of Lucky, Chus and Olumide, (2015) that reported this item with a low percent.<sup>(27)</sup> This finding in the line with, Sunshine, Lawrence, and Juan, (2015) study, which displayed that a low mean score (3.18) of item " live far from school "; (3.07) for "don't have live my parents" ; and (2.77) for "have big number of family members". This analysis shows that the students in the current study not exposed to any of these social challenges which might interfere with their academic achievement.<sup>(31)</sup>

*Noisy lecturing environment:* In the current study, the finding found this item within environment- related subscale was obtained a low mean score ( $1.23 \pm 3.05$ ) and a low level of influence on the academic performance of the students. This finding was consistent with other study that reported " Noisy lecturing environment " item has high mean scores ( $3.27 \pm 0.986$ ) and occupied the 1<sup>st</sup> rank among the other items of the failure scale (Lucky, Chus and Olumide,2015).<sup>(28)</sup> Additionally, this finding was in the line with Sunshine, Lawrence, and Juan, (2015) study, which presented that item of "classroom is comfortable enough" with a high mean score (3.57).<sup>(31)</sup>

## 6. Limitation

- ✚ In the current study, the sample was small, so to overcome this limitation in the further studies must be increased sample size.
- ✚ The gender of the study sample was female only, so for future research, male gender has to consider to reflect a real difference between both gender's perceptions.

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study was conducted to describe nursing students' perceptions toward factors influencing academic performance. A sample of one hundred fifty students was taken from professional nursing education years. The results showed" learner-related factors" was employed the first rank in both success and failure scales and most of the learner-related items have a greater impact on the students' academic performance. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended to university administrators and lecturers and academic counselors to carry out more studies on students' academic performance factors, with specific focus on the ways which provide the students with the important skills which help them to overcome or to minimize these factors which contributed to their academic performance negatively.

## References

1. Battle, J., & Lewis, M. (2002). The increasing significance of class. The relative effects of race and socioeconomic status on academic achievement. *Journal of Poverty*, 6 (2),21-35.

2. Durden, G.C., & Ellis, L.V. (1995). The effects of attitude about students learning principles of economics. *American Economic Review*, 85 (2), 343-346.
3. Ali, Norhidayah, Jusoff, Kamaruzaman, Ali, Syukriah, Mokhtar, Najah and Salamt, Azni Syafena Andin. (20December 2009). 'The Factors Influencing Students' Performance at Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah, Malaysia'. Canadian Research & Development Center of Sciences and Cultures: Vol.3 No.4.
4. Minnesota Measures, (2007). Report on higher education performance. Retrieved on May 24, 2008 from [www.opencongress.org/bill/110.s/642/show-139k](http://www.opencongress.org/bill/110.s/642/show-139k).
5. Saxton, J. (2000). Investment in education: Private and public returns. Retrieved May 25, 2013 from <http://www.house.gov/jec/>.
6. AL-Mutairi, Abdullah (May 2011). 'Factors Affecting Business Students' Performance in Arab Open University: The Case of Kuwait'. *International Journal of Business and Management*: Vol. 6, No. 5.
7. Annie Ward, Howard W. Stoker, Mildred Murray-Ward (1996). "Achievement and Ability Tests- Definition of the Domain", *Educational Measurement*, 2, University Press of America, pp. 2-5.
8. Anthony, G. (2000). Factors influencing first-year students' success in mathematics. *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology*, 31(1): 3-14.
9. Galiher, S. (2006). Understanding the effect of extracurricular involvement. A Research Project Report Presented to the School of Education. Indiana University South Bend In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Education.
10. Darling, N., Caldwell L. L., and Smith R. (2005). Participation in school-based extracurricular activities and adolescent adjustment. [Electronic version]. *Journal of Leisure Research*. v.37.
11. Hijazi, Syed Tahir and Naqvi, S.M.M. Raza (January 2006). 'Factors Affecting Students' Performance: A Case of Private Colleges'. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*: Volume 3, Number 1.
12. Crosnoe, R., Johnson M. K., & Elder, G. H. (2004). School size and the interpersonal side of education: An examination of race/ethnicity and organizational context. *Social Science Quarterly*, 85(5), 1259-1274.
13. Mann, M. (1985). *Macmillan students encyclopedia of sociology*. England: Anchor Brendon Ltd.
14. Fraser, W. and Killen R. (2003): Factors influencing academic success or failure of first – year and senior university students : do education students and lecturers perceive things differently? *South African Journal of Education*, 23 (4), 254-260. [In English].
15. Womble, LP. (2003) Impact of stress factors on college students' academic performance. *Undergraduate Journal of Psychology*. 16. Available.
16. Ajewole, G.A. & Okebukola, F.O. (2000). Improving socio- cultural aspect of classroom learning environment in enhancing students performance in biology. In *Annual Conference Proceedings of Science Teachers Association of Nigeria*, (pp127-130). Jos: HEBN Publishers Plc.
17. Diaz, Antonia Lozano (2003). Personal, Family Academic Factors Affecting Low Achievement In Secondary School. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology & Psychopedagogy*, 1(1), 43-66. ISSN: 1696-2095.
18. Blevins, B. M. (2009). Effects of socioeconomic status on academic performance in Missouri public schools.
19. Jeffreys, M.R. (2007a). Tracking students through program entry, progression, graduation, and licensure: assessing undergraduate nursing student retention and success. *Nurse Educ. Today* 27, 406-419.
20. Jeffreys, M. R. (2013). *Jeffreys's Nursing Universal Retention and Success (NURS) Model*. (Unpublished model, adapted from Jeffreys M. R. [2012] *Nursing Student Retention: Understanding the Process and Making a Difference* (2nd Ed.), New York, NY: Springer, page 12).
21. Jeffreys, M.R. (2012a). *Nursing Student Retention: Understanding the Process and Making a Difference*, 2nd ed. Springer, New York, NY.
22. Jeffreys, M.R. (2012b). *Nursing Student Retention Toolkit*. Springer, New York, NY.
23. Killen, R. (1994). Differences between students' and lecturers' perceptions of factors influencing students' academic success at university. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 13(2):199-211.
24. Fraser, W. and Killen, R. (2005): The perceptions of students and lecturers of some factors influencing academic performance at two South African universities, *Perceptions in Education*, 23(1), 25-39 [In English].
25. Zulu, C. (2008). An exploratory study of first-year students at a historically black university campus in South Africa: Their academic experiences, success and failure. *Africa Education Review*, 5(1): 30-47.
26. Zhang, A., Aasheim C.L. (2011). Academic success factors: An IT student perspective. *Journal of Information Technology Education*, 10: 309-331.
27. Lucky, S., Chux, G.I. and Olumide, H.B. (2015). Academic Success Factors: Implications for Teaching, Learning and Academic Administration, *Int J Edu Sci* 10(2)269-279.
28. Lucky, S., Chux G.I., and Olumide H.B. (2015). Factors influencing academic performance of university students. *ISSN 2072-9480. Demography and social economy*, No 2 (24), 103-115.
29. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 20, Inc, Chicago, Illinois, USA.

30. Steenkamp, L.P., and Baard R.S. (2009). Factors influencing success in first-year accounting at a South African university: A comparison between lecturers' assumptions and students' perceptions. *South African Journal of Accounting Research*, 23(1): 113-140.
31. Sunshine, B. Alos, Lawrence, C. Caranto, and Juan Jose T. David (2015). Factors affecting the academic performance of the student nurses of BSU. *International Journal of Nursing Science*. e-ISSN2167-745X. doi:10.5923/j.nursing.20150502.04. 5(2):60-65.

*Table 1: Description of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Study Respondents*

Variables	Frequency (n) = 150	%
<b>Age ( Year)</b>		
20-	21	14.0
21-	32	21.3
22-	76	50.7
23-	21	14.0
<b>Mean <math>\pm</math> SD</b>	<b>21.64 <math>\pm</math> .890</b>	
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	150	100
<b>Nationality</b>		
Saudi	150	100
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	148	98.7
Married	2	1.30
<b>Admission qualification (Secondary school %)</b>		
$\leq 90$ -	118	78.7
95 -	32	21.3
100 -	0	0.00
<b>Academic year</b>		
Third year	79	52.7
Fourth year	71	47.3
<b>Level of English Language Skills</b>		
Excellent	5	3.30
Very good	50	33.4
Good	86	57.3
Poor	9	6.00
<b>Do you have any language barrier?</b>		
Yes	57	38.0
No	93	62.0
<b>Student performance (GPA /Last Semester)</b>		
A+/A	14	9.30
B+/B	107	71.3
C+/C	22	14.7
D+/D	7	4.70
F	0	0.00

*Table 2: Internal Reliability of Success Factors*

Items of Success Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
1.Learner - related	.857	21
2.Lecturer - related	.822	11
3.Learning resources - related	.551	5
4.Curriculum - related	.107	1
Total	.902	38

*Table 3: Internal Reliability of Failure Factors*

Sets of Failure Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
1. Learner - related	.876	24
2. Curriculum - related	.851	5
3. Lecturer - related	.796	4
4. Learning resources - related	.673	4
5. Socioeconomic -related	.431	3
6. Environment -related	.098	1
Total	.914	41

*Table 4: Ranking of Mean and Standards Deviation of Items of the Success Factors that Influencing Students' Academic Performance*

Items	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
<b>1. Learner-related</b>			
1. Regular attendance at lecture	3.95	0.33	HI
2. Regular study	3.88	0.40	HI
3. Self-motivation to become successful in life	3.86	0.42	HI
4. Hardworking, commitment and dedication	3.83	0.44	HI
5. Paying enough attention at lectures	3.81	0.47	HI
6. Tutorials	3.77	0.52	HI
7. Ability to understand in-depth content of subjects	3.75	0.53	HI
8. Assignment completion and submission	3.73	0.56	HI
9. Ability to work independently	3.63	0.64	HI
10. Self-discipline	3.61	0.67	HI
11. External motivation from family ,friends, and lecturer, guest speaker	3.55	0.74	HI
12. Financial support, for example from family	3.53	0.72	HI
13. Self-confidence to make presentations in class	3.50	0.78	HI
14. Effective time management and organizational skills	3.34	0.94	HI
15. Timely and regular examination preparation	2.97	1.32	LI
16. Dedication to the dream of owning a qualification	2.95	1.33	LI
17. Ability to work in group activities	2.92	1.35	LI
18. Good writing skills	2.90	1.38	LI
19. Effective study methods	2.89	1.39	LI
20. Having a positive attitude towards university education	2.86	1.41	LI
21. Reading beyond the prescribed material	2.84	1.44	LI
<b>2. Lecturer – related</b>			
1. Motivated and encouragement lecturers	3.72	0.45	HI
2. Supportive and approachable lecturers	3.63	0.64	HI
3. Clear presentations by lecturers	3.54	0.73	HI
4. Lecturer availability for consultation	3.45	0.82	HI
5. Lecturers' attendance to lectures on time	2.97	1.32	LI
6. Regular and comprehensive feedback on progress from lecturers	2.91	1.37	LI
7. Practical relevant content	2.90	1.38	LI
8. Lecturers to communicate exam dates, allowing time for preparation	2.86	1.42	LI
9. Lecturers giving more time in lectures	2.84	1.44	LI
10. Assignments given by all lecturers at the same time	2.74	1.53	LI
11. Information if class is cancelled	2.71	1.56	LI
<b>3. Learning Resources – related</b>			
1. Applicability of course contents of lecturers' notes and slides via blackboard learning	3.22	1.05	HI
2. Access to resources & support services, e.g. ,libraries,internet	3.12	1.16	HI
3. Quiet and comfortable lecture rooms	2.84	1.43	LI
4. Having own resources, for example, textbooks	2.81	1.46	LI
5. Regular use of library resource	2.22	2.06	LI
<b>4. Curriculum - related</b>			
1. Implementation of theory into practice	2.60	0.83	LI

*Table 5: Ranking of the Mean and Standards Deviation for the Items of the Failure Factors that Influencing Students' Academic Performance*

Items	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
<b>1. Learner-related</b>			
1. Lack of attendance at lectures	3.73	0.44	HI
2. Heavy course workload	3.88	0.40	HI
3. Poor time management and organizational skills	3.85	0.43	HI
4. Inability to manage stress	3.82	0.46	HI
5. Lack of self-motivation	3.78	0.49	HI
6. Viewing group activities as challenging	3.67	0.60	HI
7. Lack of external motivation from family, friend	3.23	0.45	HI
8. Not finishing or doing assignments	2.98	1.29	LI
9. Lack of dedication and commitment	2.97	1.30	LI
10. Lack of self-discipline	2.95	1.32	LI
11. Poor writing skills	2.90	1.38	LI
12. Lack of participation in group activities	2.88	1.40	LI
13. Failure to reach the depth of understanding required at tertiary level	2.86	1.42	LI
14. Failure to approach lecturers or tutor	2.84	1.44	LI
15. Language challenges	2.81	1.47	LI
16. Not paying enough attention at lectures	2.79	1.48	LI
17. Lack of self-confidence	2.76	1.51	LI
18. Insufficient effort – studying	2.73	1.55	LI
19. Low self – esteem	2.72	1.58	LI
20. Studying only to pass exams	2.70	1.59	LI
21. Laziness	2.67	1.61	LI
22. Personal problems, e.g., financial problem and resources	2.64	1.63	LI
23. Negative attitude towards studies	1.96	2.32	LI
24. Lack of interest in the course	1.88	2.40	LI
<b>2. Curriculum – related</b>			
1. Too many demands on student's time	3.79	0.48	HI
2. Poor first year foundation	3.58	0.71	HI
3. Lack of alignment between practice and theory	1.46	2.81	LI
4. Poor examination preparation	0.00	0.00	LI
5. Not given the opportunity to explore own business ideas	0.00	0.00	LI
<b>3. Lecturer-related</b>			
1. Lack of communication between students and lecturers	2.96	1.31	LI
2. Lecturer with unrealistically high expectation from students	2.45	1.82	LI
3. Boring presentations by lecturers	1.95	2.33	LI
4. Realizing one is doing a wrong course	0.00	0.00	LI
<b>4. Learning resources-related</b>			
1. Lack of resources, e.g. textbooks and computer at home	1.92	2.35	LI
2. Lack of tutors and tutorials	1.83	2.44	LI
3. Little usage of the library	1.62	2.68	LI
4. Lack of access to university facilities e.g. internet	0.50	3.77	LI
<b>5. Socioeconomic-related</b>			
1. Unstable social challenges, for example, poverty, crime	1.52	2.76	LI
2. Upfront cash payments by tutors from the students	0.00	0.00	LI
3. Part-time jobs by students to raise money for fees and books	0.00	0.00	LI
<b>6. Environment-related</b>			
1. Noisy lecturing environment	1.23	3.05	LI

*Table 6: Ranking of the Mean and Standards Deviation of the Success Factors Subscales that Influencing Students' Academic Performance*

<b>Success Factors</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. Learner - related	150	3.00	4.00	3.43	0.85	1
2. Lecturer - related	150	2.00	4.00	3.11	1.15	2
3. Learning resources – related	150	1.00	3.00	2.84	1.43	3
4. Curriculum – related	150	1.00	3.00	2.60	.836	4

*Table 7: Ranking of the Mean and Standards Deviation of the Failure Factors Subscales that Influencing Students' Academic Performance*

<b>Failure Factors</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1. Learner - related	150	1.00	4.00	3.00	1.25	1
2. Lecturer - related	150	1.00	4.00	1.84	1.37	2
3. Curriculum – related	150	1.00	4.00	1.76	0.8	3
4. Learning resources – related	150	1.00	4.00	1.47	2.81	4
5. Environment – related	150	1.00	4.00	1.23	3.05	5
6. Socioeconomic related	150	1.00	4.00	0.51	0.92	6