

Evaluating Nursing Students' Academic Motivation through Academic Motivational Scale: A Cross-Sectional Study of Two Colleges

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ABSTRACT

Background: Learning is an ongoing process. To achieve desired learning outcomes of the academic journey, students must possess motivation, resilience, and effective communication skills. The positive motivation regarding the academic journey increase students' motivation for learning. This will benefit students to achieve desired results without major obstacles.

Objective: To identify the nursing students' motivation towards their academic journey.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study. Nursing students of first & second year were invited to participate voluntarily. Informed consent was employed before data collection. Two Nursing Colleges affiliated with Peoples University of Medical and Health Sciences for Women Nawabshah were selected as a study site and the duration was from 16th February to 28th February 2021. The convenience sampling technique was used to collect data through a structured, 28-item Academic Motivational Scale.

Results: The response rate was of the survey was 100% as all the approached participants responded and completed the survey. The results showed that nursing students were extrinsically motivated (mean=3.78 & SD =1.19) than internally motivated (mean=3.41 & SD=1.13). The main reasons for their extrinsic motivation were to seek a good salary job and live a good life.

Conclusion: Students were extrinsically motivated therefore the intrinsic motivation needs to be enhanced through improving the image of the profession among students, making them autonomous, self-directed, and listening to them for understanding their life situations.

Keywords: Academic motivational scale, nursing students, academic achievement, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Effective learning outcomes and environment, motivation, resilience, support, and collaborative learning is key to the students' successful learning excursion. Nursing students must feel autonomous and supported during this journey. They crave for senior and peer support. The indicators of nursing students' successful and satisfying learning journey include the collaborative learning environment where students feel included and optimized [1]. Motivated students unveil skills of creative thinking and reflective practice. Motivation is categorized as Intrinsic or Intentional Motivation (IM) and Extrinsic or Unintentional Motivation (EM). IM is autonomous motivation because one is motivated to perform something without any reward whereas EM is a controlled motivation because one performs something for an incentive such as a better salary or getting a reward [2]. The research has

demonstrated that the students' motivation and their level of competency remain incongruent [3].

There are various issues discussed in the context of students' motivation related to their academic journey. The very first issue is 'gliding through' means 'a wish to be prepared enough to discharge duties competently' [4]. This motivation is portrayed as 'professional excellence'; a motivation to be geared towards practical and instrumental goals. It is further clarified that students wished to be good earners through securing a market competent (good salary) based job, once they start a career. Positive motivation helps individuals to better communication skills, self-efficacy, and build healthy interpersonal relationships at work. The other goals were elaborated as self-betterment and fulfillment of social expectations. In the nutshell, positively motivated will be better professionals whereas negatively motivated fail to display professional attire [5]. The main obstacle in this context was revealed as 'the initial shock of the study'. This shock was described as the major barrier for the student towards the adjustment as a university student anticipating expectations to transition to a Registered Nurse. This point was critical

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where the student needed vital support and motivation from the institution and faculty members to make an initial journey successful. To make a student's transition experiences successful, a deep investigation is necessary because students' motivations are impacted by academic achievements, support networks, and personal development. Academic progress is impacted by students' inability to balance study-related workload as most of the students considered the first year (semester) as a challenging one. An incompetent support system develops feelings of alienation and homesickness among students. Students' incompetency to balance workloads and feelings of loneliness affects students' personal growth and development. That was the point where students must be supported to be independent and resilient [6]. Therefore, it is well argued that research studies on students' nature of motivation provide concurrent feedback for teachers and institutions to determine the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process [2].

At present, there is no study conducted among nursing students enrolled in Bachelors of Sciences in Nursing (BSNG- 04 year) studies in Health Science Universities located in rural areas of Sindh, Pakistan; to assess their motivation towards the academic journey. This study was planned to fill the knowledge gap in this area. The study aims to explore nursing students' expectations regarding their academic journey in a university. The study helped to understand the main reasons, students joined the nursing profession. In this way, they can be motivated in a better direction. The objective of the study was to assess the nursing students' motivation towards the academic journey.

METHODS

This study employed a cross-sectional design to collect data from the first year and second year Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSNG- 04 years) students enrolled in two nursing colleges affiliated with Peoples University of Medical & Health Sciences for women, Nawabshah, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sindh, Pakistan, from 15th to 28th February 2021. The population for this study was nursing students enrolled during 2018-19 & 2019-20 sessions in both affiliated colleges. This is a full-time BSNG- (four years) degree program. Exclusion criteria were set as students who remained absent for the last two weeks. A convenient sampling technique was used for sample collection. In a previously conducted similar study, the highest reported mean score was 6.45 ± 0.99 among all sub-items of the survey [7]. Therefore by taking an $SD = 0.99$, confidence interval of 95% and margin of error = 0.17, a sample of 130 is required. Before starting data collection, all the students were explained the aim and objectives of the study, and written informed consent was initiated.

A structured survey questionnaire 'Academic Motivation Scale' (AMS-C-28), developed by Vallerand *et al.*, was used to collect the data. The scale is based on Self-determination Theory (SDT). The survey questions included 28 items and each item was to be answered on a Likert scale of 05. On the Likert scale, 01 represented not at all, 02=a little, 03=moderately, 04=a lot, and 05=exactly. The 28-items of the questionnaire (AMS-C-28) represented seven constructs (each construct has four items). The constructs are Intrinsic Motivation (IM) –to know (item # 02,09,16,23), IM-towards accomplishment (item # 6,13,20,27), IM-to experience stimulation (item # 4,11,18,25), Extrinsic Motivation (EM)-identified (item # 3,10,17,24), EM-interjected (item # 7,14,21,28), EM-External Regulation (item # 1, 8, 15, 22) and A-motivation (item # 05, 12, 19, 26) [8].

The Ethics Review Committee of Peoples University of Medical & Health Sciences for Women, Nawabshah, Shaheed Benazirabad was approached to give ethical clearance for study No. PUMHS/SBA/PVC/80 dated 15/02/2021.

Data Analysis: SPSS version 22 was used to analyze the data. The nominal data were analyzed by calculating frequencies and percentages and ordinal data (Likert scale responses) were calculated by mean and Standard Deviations (SD).

RESULTS

In total 132 students participated in the study. The response rate was 100%. The age of the respondents ranged between 18-27 years with a mean age of 21.8 ± 1.86 years. Table 1 shows demographic variables of study participants including age, college, year of the study, and mother tongue.

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for the recorded response of the study participants. The mean score for extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation is 3.78 ± 1.19 and 3.41 ± 1.13 respectively. The highest mean score was observed for good salary (4.25 ± 1.01), additional years to improve competencies (4.06 ± 1.18), good life (4.02 ± 1.09), and motivation to be successful in studies (3.94 ± 1.18).

Table 1: Demographic variables of the respondents.

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	30	22.7
	Female	102	77.3
College	College A	70	53
	College B	62	47
Year of Study	First	73	55.3
	Second	59	44.7
Language	Sindhi	77	58.3
	Urdu	15	11.25
	Siraiki/Balouchi	28	21
	Punjabi	06	4.5
	Others	06	4.5

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the construct wise responses of the AMS-C-28 questionnaire.

S#	Constructs	Sub-Constructs	Mean & SD
1	IM –to know	Experience pleasure & Satisfaction	3.15 ±1.05
		The pleasure of discovering new things	3.62±1.28
		The pleasure of brooding new knowledge	3.30±1.27
		Contribute to learning thing that interests me	3.83 ± 1.24
2	IM-towards accomplishment	Pleasure in surpassing myself in studies	3.70 ± 1.17
		The pleasure of surpassing myself in the process of professional accomplishments	2.71± 1.36
		Satisfaction accomplishing difficult academic activities	3.59 ± 1.25
		Personal satisfaction in experiencing excellence in studies	3.76 ± 1.23
3	IM-to experience stimulation	Intense feelings for communicating my ideas	2.85 ± 1.13
		A pleasure to read interesting authors	2.98 ± 1.40
		Completely absorbed for what certain authors have written	2.97 ± 1.16
		High feelings for reading interesting subjects	3.64 ± 1.34
4	EM-identified	College education prepares for career choice	3.75 ± 1.07
		Enable me to enter the job market	3.73 ± 1.39
		The better choice regarding career orientation	3.69 ± 1.20
		Additional years improve competencies	4.06 ± 1.18
5	EM-interjected	Prove that capable of completing a college education	2.89 ± 1.32
		Feel important, college success	3.47 ± 1.26
		Intelligent person	3.78 ± 1.21
		I will be successful in my studies	3.94 ± 1.18
6	EM-external regulation	High school degree, no high paying job	3.89 ± 1.22
		To obtain the more prestigious job	3.86 ± 1.16
		Good life	4.02 ± 1.09
		Good salary	4.25 ± 1.01
7	(no)motivation	Wasting my time	2.20 ± 1.22
		Wonder should continue college	2.73 ± 1.22
		Why going to college	2.37 ± 1.22
		What is doing in college?	2.39 ± 1.28

DISCUSSION

This was a cross-sectional study to assess students' motivation towards the academic journey. In the light of the study results, it is inferred that study participants are extrinsically motivated towards the academic journey. The construct, 'EM- External regulation' received mean and SD scores of 4.01±1.18 respectively. The factors behind this kind of motivation were 'good salary' and 'good life. The 'EM- regulated' pertains to behaviors carried out because of any external reward or punishments. They didn't hold the value of inner sake. They are conceded as a means to an end. The word means to end is related to motivation in the sense of getting a reward, such as a good job. Or to avoid punishment, such as avoiding joblessness and making self, safe from financial problems [9]. The results of the study are congruent with a study conducted at a local university in Manila. The study showed that the sample was extrinsically motivated rather than intrinsically

motivated. The result exhibited that the sub construct, 'college education will help me better prepare for the career, I have chosen' received mean (highest) score (6.45) & SD (0.99) [7]. In our study, the same sub-construct (College education.....for the career) received sixth position (mean=3.75 & SD=1.07). The difference in the results can be attributed to factors like better employment opportunities in the local and international arena [10].

The 'EM- identified' received a mean score of 3.81±1.21. The results of this study are consistent with a study conducted with nursing students in a university degree program in Sweden during April-May 2006. The authors argued that 'EM- identified help students to gain new insights for their prospects. The students' hopeful looks for their plans enhance in them the 'EM-identified' [11]. The students' wish to strengthen the theory-practical components to improve patients care was the main stimulus in this regard [2]. The participants were

expected to improve and strengthen their competencies as they can enter the job market easily. The behaviors which are valued and judged important for self are adopted. These behaviors are important to develop interpersonal relationships [11]. Another factor that is important in EM- identified is social pressure. Nursing students were expected by parents to get a university degree to secure a job opportunity in the future [10].

The 'EM- Interjected' received a mean score of 3.52 ± 1.25 . The participants were expecting to be successful in their studies because they wished to prove themselves as intelligent persons. In the 'EM- Interjected', an individual starts to internalize the reasons for his actions [11]. These are vulnerable groups as they possess weak motivational profiles. They struggle for academic achievements. The role of faculty members is important here. Faculty members must keep a close eye and sympathetic attitudes to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem [12]. Moreover, faculties should be inspiring, indebted and friendly towards students. It supports students to work efficiently in the stimulating environment, which is their future place to work after graduating [13].

The construct of 'IM' was second in line according to the results of the study. 'IM-to know' received fourth place in the line of expectations as mean & SD score for this construct were 3.48 ± 1.12 . Participants were expected to learn things that interested them and discover new things while going through their studies. Intrinsic Motivation is defined as a type of stimulus that produces a behavior for its own sake, here, the rewards and punishments are set aside. IM is derived from a psychological need for self-determination and competency. IM to know is related to curiosity, exploration, learning goals, and intellectuality [11]. The results demonstrated that students lack those capabilities. These students lack the necessary drive for achieving successful educational results. They are just required to get degrees. The teachers must be concerned for those students and try to cultivate the attitudes for adopting physical and psychological activities to attain purposeful performances and results [14].

The construct 'IM-towards accomplishment' received a mean of 3.44 ± 1.25 respectively. The participants were expecting personal satisfaction in experiencing excellence in studies by surpassing themselves in the process of professional accomplishments. IM –towards accomplishment is termed as mastery to motivation. This inner stimulus drives individuals to feel competent by creating unique examples in the process of their educational journey [11]. Accomplishment is something that satisfies an individual's curiosity by developing a sense of autonomy and self-determination [14]. This can be done by empowering students and creating effective

interpersonal relationships with students. Leaders and role models can blight students into self-aware individuals [15].

The construct 'IM-to experience stimulation' received mean & SD scores of 3.11 ± 1.26 respectively. The participants were expecting stimulation towards reading interesting subjects by completely absorbing the subject matter of what some authors had written. IM to experience stimulation is termed as the motivation which harvests sensory and esthetic inclination, fun and exhilaration duration, or after engagement in an activity. Students are active, listen to the lectures attentively, and pose relevant and probing questions to stimulate the discussion [11]. This kind of motivation creates a conducive environment for students as well as teachers learning. By introducing interest and positive behavior, this motivation could be enhanced [15]. By harvesting IM-experiencing stimulations, students' aptitude, interest, and desire to help could be promoted. Nursing is a difficult job and IM-experiencing stimulation will develop resilience among them to tackle difficult situations effectively. Extrinsic motivation is less likely to develop resilience among those future nurses. This will also help in retention and dealing with nurses' burnout syndrome [16].

The last construct "a-motivation" received mean & SD scores of 2.42 ± 1.24 . Some of the participants were expected to quit as they didn't see anything worth continuing their studies. The behavior loans due to mismatch between an individual's actions and anticipated effects are called 'a-motivation. It ripens the discernments of incompetency and uncontrollability. This forces them to be passive [11]. The nurse students require the proper way of communication and coordination to convert passive to active students. To achieve this, trained and experienced faculties should come forward to diagnose the proper needs of the student to intervene to reduce their a-motivation [15].

A students' motivation owns a direct influence on his/her learning endings. To be a good nurse professional is an absorbing journey. It twitches from an individual's personal eagerness for a selected job category. Social factors play an important role in academic success. This study has goals resulted that university must adopt strategies to enhance students' social achievement [17].

CONCLUSION

This was an important study and a unique one to assess students' academic motivation during their undergraduate studies. The students have demonstrated a higher level of EM than IM, therefore, they are planning to get a good salary job and make them financially viable.

Faculty members and institutional heads have a big responsibility to change their academic approach to nurture students for developing IM. Intrinsically motivated students don't join nursing, only for the sake of job security. IM students value profession and work for the betterment of society. One of the strategies nursing faculties must utilize is improving the professional image and empowering them to feel that they are valued in society. Nursing is a challenging profession. To keep the motivation of students towards academic performances and achievement intact, faculties must keep students energized to sustain their inner urge to move them in a goal-oriented manner. Lastly, students must be realized that the aim of the academic journey doesn't confine to get a good salary job, although, it is one of the only objectives of this journey. The academic journey is an opportunity to develop insights and connect personal life experiences with professional endeavors. It helps to comprehend key concepts of autonomy and empowerment. This can only cultivate them as a true professionals who will keep their personal gains secondary behind professional integrity and accountability.

STRENGTH OF THE STUDY

In the past, only one study used the 28-item Academic Motivational Scale (Javaeed *et al.* [18]) in the Pakistani context. The population of the aforementioned study was medical students of Azad Kashmir. Our study's strength is its new population viz-a-viz nursing students' enrolled in BSN-04 year's degree program of Public Sector University in rural Sindh.

LIMITATION

This is a cross-sectional study and the sample is taken from two colleges attached with a public sector university of Sindh. Therefore, caution should be exercised while generalizing the results of the study.

ETHICS APPROVAL

The Ethics Review Committee of Peoples University of Medical & Health Sciences for Women, Nawabshah, Shaheed Benazirabad was approached to give ethical clearance for study No. PUMHS/SBA/PVC/80 dated 15/02/2021.

All procedures/data collection methods (involving human participants) performed in this study were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and with the Helsinki declaration."

CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION

Not applicable.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest involved in this study. This study has been conducted as a professional activity and for a desire to develop a nursing research culture among nurse professionals.

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