

## Contributing Factors to Advance Academic Achievement

### Among Nursing Students at Benha Nursing Faculty

Zeinab A. Abd El-Naby, Karima A. Elsayed, Nora A. Abdullah

**Abstract:** There are many factors that affect academic achievement of nursing students. The purpose of the study was to identify contributing factors to advance academic achievement at Faculty of Nursing Benha University. **Methods:** The study was conducted at the faculty of nursing at Benha University. The sample consisted of 366 fourth year nursing students who enrolled at academic year 2016/ 2017. Two instruments were used for data gathering. First instrument was used namely (Contributing factors to advance academic achievement questionnaire sheet). It was divided into four parts: personal characteristic of the nursing student and factors of students' success, faculty staff support questionnaire, student self-efficacy scale. Second instrument was used namely student achievement. **Result:** The majority of students (95.9%) had high perception level regarding factors of success, (98.4%) perceived faculty staff support and (92.1%) self-efficacy. **Conclusion:** this study concluded that there was a statistical significant positive correlation between factors of success, faculty support, self-efficacy on student achievement. **Recommendations:** report for continuous improvement in the quality of education to assess the needs of nursing students, faculty members should participate nursing students in this differential educational teaching, and faculty can also foster students' habits by running courses in learning strategy.

**Keywords:** Nursing students, contributing factors to advance, academic achievement.

### Introduction

With continuously growing numbers of nursing students entering higher education, university educators, managers and policy makers are faced with a greater attention towards identifying academic achievement, and limiting nursing student attrition. Nursing education refers to transfers of professional skills, knowledge and attitudes from one generation to another in progress of the nursing careers (Ahmed et al., 2017).

The level of success nursing students achieve in their first semesters of college has far-reaching implications for nursing students' personal and professional lives. Nursing student success has an immediate influence on a nursing student's academic self-efficacy, persistence in elected majors, and perseverance in higher education (Anne and Jeremy, 2017).

Academic achievement refers to the scores of nursing students in a specific subject. In academic achievement states to how well or badly a nursing student does in study as assessed

through various means such as tests, assignments, field work and examinations during the entire implementation of any education curriculum. The assessment can be done on the bases of daily classroom participation and consignment, end of the topic/unit/semester and end of educational program (Alshehry and Mohamed, 2017).

Academic achievement in nursing faculty has frequently been used as a scale for university academic achievement. Studies throughout the world demonstrate that grade point average in secondary education correlates to attrition at university (Gbolli and Pear, 2017). However, grade point average itself is heavily influenced by a number of factors, including parental education status, which itself can impact on family socio-economic status, and the nursing student's consequent educational facility (Anderton, 2017).

When nursing students encounter this kind of support, they respond

positively in their search of stability and success in their academic achievement. University culture makes nursing students involved actively in their own learning, a key element for academic achievement. In this regard, the university needs to ensure the stability of nursing students by offering the services and orientation that they need to accomplish their main academic goals in their major (**Michelle and Gary, 2017**).

Nursing student-faculty interaction can improve nursing student persistence. Support for the importance of faculty-student connections by establishing that satisfaction with instructors and satisfaction with faculty support significantly affected overall satisfaction with the college environment; this, in turn, contributed to student goals to complete a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree (**Terry et al., 2016**).

One of the criteria for effective learning in nursing education is self efficacy. Self efficacy has been cited as the final goal of nursing education. It includes skills of operating knowledge and information, communication and interpersonal skills, problem-solving and technical skills. Nursing faculties are one of the organizations responsible for stimulating self efficacy. Nursing faculties should fulfill the needs of society and train nurses who have high-level of self efficacy (**Haskell et al., 2016**).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the study was to identify contributing factors to advance academic achievement at Benha nursing faculty.

### **Research questions**

- 1) What are contributing factors to advance academic achievement?

- 2) What are student's opinion related to factors contributing to student success, faculty staff support and their self efficacy?
- 3) Is there a relation among students' perception for faculty staff support, their self efficacy and their academic achievement?

### **Methods**

#### **1- Research Design**

Descriptive correlational design was utilized to conduct this study.

#### **2- Study setting**

This study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing Benha University. It was established in 1992 and it got accreditation in 25/ 8/ 2014. There are six academic departments in the faculty including: Nursing Administration Department, Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing Department, Community Health Nursing Department, Pediatric Nursing Department, Obstetric and Woman Health Nursing Department and Medical and Surgical Nursing Department.

**3- Sampling:** A number of 366 fourth year nursing students who enrolled at academic year 2016/ 2017.

#### **4- Instruments of Data Collection**

Data were collected by using two instruments

**Instrument one: - Contributing factors to advance academic achievement questionnaire sheet.**

It included four parts:

**Part 1:** Personal characteristics of nursing students. It was developed by the researcher such as age, sex, family income, social status, pre - university education, residential area, setting, the number of family members.

**Part 2: Factors of student success questionnaire.**

It was developed by Perger and Takaces (2016) and was modified by researcher to assess nursing students' perception regarding factors of

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success. It consisted of 31 items. It was categorized into eight dimensions which included 31 items, these dimensions were Support by family and friends, Practice-oriented education, Social relationships in university, Support for student's learning in classroom, Student's study habits, Student's attitude towards responsibilities in university, Assistance provided by the remedial courses, Conscious career choice. ( $\alpha=0.896$ ).

**Scoring system**

Scoring items	Score
Not important	1
Sometimes important	2
Important	3

**Part 3 - Perceived Faculty Staff Support questionnaire.**

It was developed by Calaguas and Glenn (2013) and was modified by researcher to assess nursing students' perception regarding support received from faculty staff as factor contributing to advance academic achievement. It consisted of 52 items. It was categorized into six dimensions and included 52 items, six dimensions were Personality characteristics, Subject matter Expertise, Staff relation with students, Teaching style, Professional competence, Classroom management style. ( $\alpha=0.919$ ).

**Scoring system**

Scoring items	Score
Disagree	1
Not sure	2
Agree	3

**Part 4 - Student Self Efficacy Scale.**

It was developed by Schwarazera, (2013) and was modified by researcher to assess nursing students' perception regarding their self efficacy as factor contributing to advance academic achievement. It consisted of 10 items. ( $\alpha=0.792$ ).

**Scoring system**

Scoring items	Score
Never	1

Sometimes	2
Always	3

**Instrument two:- Student Achievement record**

It contains student final score. The form contains student name and grade. Students score ranging from excellent to fail.

**Scoring system**

Scoring items	Score
Fail	< 60%
Pass	60%-64%
Good	65%-74%
Very good	75%- 84%
Excellent	85% -100%

**Procedure:**

- 1) Official permission was obtained from the dean of Benha Faculty of Nursing Benha University to collect necessary data.
- 2) Contributing factors to advance academic achievement and student achievement were translated into Arabic and tested for validity by 5 experts from nursing administration department, two professors of them from Faculty of Nursing Monfayia University and 3 experts (two assistant professor and one lecturer) from nursing Tanta University.
- 3) A pilot study was conducted in April 2017 and was carried out on 37 of the nursing students to ensure clarity and relevancy of tools and included in the study subjects. No modifications were done.
- 4) For ethical consideration: Before conducting the study, researcher had done explanation of the nature and aim of the study has been explained to nursing students. They were informed that participation in the study is voluntary and informal consent was obtained from each participant in the study. Confidentiality of data obtained was protected by the allocation of

a code number to the questionnaire sheets. Nursing students were informed that the content of the tool was used for the research purpose only. Participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time was ascertained.

- 5) The data of two instruments were collected over period of three months started from March 2017 to May 2017.
- 6) The researcher was distributed the tool to the students after clear the purpose of the study. The time needed to complete the tools were 20-30 minutes for collecting data from nursing students.
- 7) Instrument of student achievement was collected by researcher from control room at the end of final written examination during August 2017.

#### **Statistical analysis**

The collected was revised, coded, tabulated and using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 24). Descriptive statistics were applied in the form of means, standard deviation for quantitative variables and frequency and percentages for qualitative variables. Qualitative categorical variables were compared using chi-square test, but when the expected count is less than 5 in more than 20% of the cells; Fisher's Exact Test was used. Pearson correlation coefficient was used. A statistical significance was considered at p-value  $P < 0.05$ , and considered highly statistical significance at p-value  $P < 0.001$ .

#### **Results**

**Table (1):** Shows that the two third (69.1%) of nursing students were aged 22years old. Regarding to sex, the majority of nursing students (82.2%) were female. For marital status, most of nursing students (81.1%) were

single. Regarding to pre university education, the majority (87.7%) of nursing students had general secondary school. Regarding to residence, more than half of nursing students (59.8%) were from rural area. Regarding to living place, 78.1% of them live with their family. Regarding to numbers of family members, 60.1% of them had 4-6 members of family.

**Table (2):** Shows that the majority (95.9%) of nursing students had high perception level regarding total of factors of success, while (4.1%) of them had moderate perception level. All of nursing students had high perception level regarding dimensions of support by family and friends and support for student's learning in classroom. About 26.5% of nursing students had moderate level of perception of factors of success related to dimensions student's study habits.

**Table (3):** Shows that the approximately all students (98.4%) had high level of perception level regarding faculty staff support, while 1.6% of them had moderate perception.

**Figure (1):** Clarified that the majority (92.1%) of nursing students had high level of self-efficacy, while 7.9% of them had moderate level of self-efficacy.

**Figure (2):** Clarified that more than half (54.6%) of nursing students had total very good grade, while 31.7% of them had total excellent grade, (11.5%) of nursing students had total good grade, about 0.3% of them had total pass grade and 1.9% of nursing students had fail grade.

**Table (4):** Demonstrates that there was a highly statistically significant positive correlation between factors of success, faculty staff support, self-efficacy, and academic achievement.

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**Table (1): Distribution of nursing students according to their Personal characteristics (n=366)**

Personal characteristics	No	%
<b>Age ( years)</b>		
21<22	39	10.7
22<23	253	69.1
>23	74	20.2
<b>Mean SD</b>		22.10 0.548
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	65	17.8
Female	301	82.2
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	297	81.1
Married	69	18.9
<b>Pre - University Education</b>		
General secondary school	321	87.7
High Nursing institute	45	12.3
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	147	40.2
Rural	219	59.8
<b>Living in</b>		
With family	286	78.1
At University City	80	21.9
<b>Number of family members</b>		
1-3	131	35.8
4-6	220	60.1
7-9	15	4.1

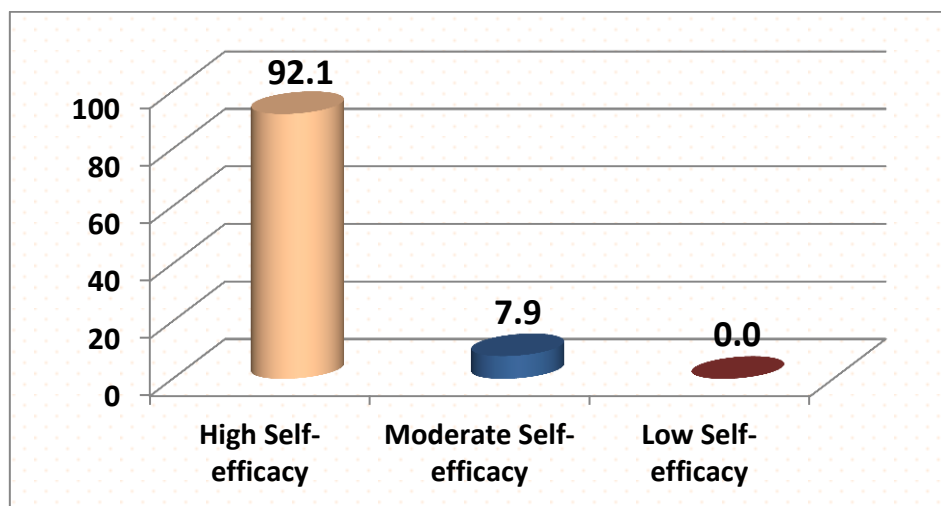
**Table (2): Levels of nursing students' perception regarding factors of success (n=366)**

Dimensions of factors of success	Levels of perception			
	high		Moderate	
	No	%	No	%
Support by family and friends	366	100.0	0	0.0
Practice-oriented education	347	94.8	19	5.2
Social relationships in university	296	80.9	70	19.1
Support for student's learning in classroom	366	100.0	0	0.0
Student's study habits	269	73.5	97	26.5
Student's attitude towards responsibilities in university	317	86.6	49	13.4
Assistance provided by the remedial courses	332	90.7	34	9.3
Conscious career choice	319	87.2	47	12.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4.1</b>

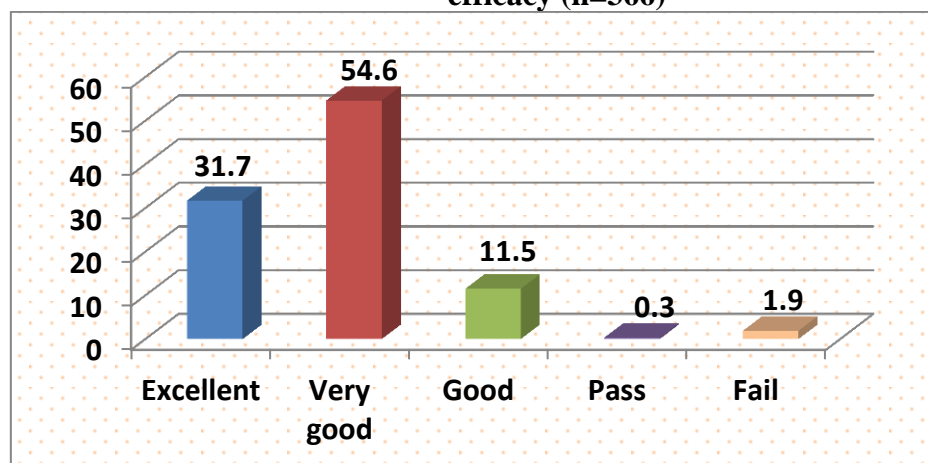
**Table (3): Levels of nursing students' perception regarding faculty staff support (n=366)**

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dimensions of faculty staff support	Levels of perception			
	High		Moderate	
	No	%	No	%
Personality characteristics	346	94.5	20	5.5
Subject matter Expertise	328	89.6	38	10.4
Staff relation with students	362	98.9	4	1.1
Teaching style	357	97.5	9	2.5
professional competence	361	98.6	5	1.4
Classroom management style	358	97.8	8	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>98.4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.6</b>



**Figure (1):** Distribution of nursing students according to total level of Self efficacy (n=366)



**Figure (2):** Distribution of nursing students according to their academic Achievement level (n=366)

**Table (4):** Correlations between nursing students ' academic achievement, Factors of success, faculty staff support and self efficacy (n=366).

Variables	Academic achievement	
	r	P value
Factors of success	0.722	0.000**
Faculty staff support	0.541	0.000**
Self – efficacy	0.767	0.000**

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\*A statistical significant difference ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) \*\*A highly statistical significant difference ( $P \leq 0.001$ )

### **Discussion**

All students struggle for success, which is the most motivating outcome a student can experience. Preparing students for success is not easy tasks, but luckily there are many ways for teachers and faculties to prepare and promote success experiences in the classroom. Academic achievement is one of the most important concepts in the field of education. It refers to the level at which undergraduate students perform in their course of study at the University (Ndaji et al., 2016).

The result of the factor study showed eight factors which contribute to the successful completion of university studies, and in this study were interpreted as factors affecting academic success. These factors are support by family and friends, practice-oriented education, social relationships on university, support for student's learning in classroom, student's study habits, student's attitude towards responsibilities in university, assistance provided by the remedial courses, and conscious career choice.

The findings of the study revealed that the students agreed that supports for student's learning in classroom, and support by family and friends, to be the first most important factor and practice-oriented education to be the second most important factor in degree completion. However, the assistance provided by the remedial courses was the third most important of the eight factors, then conscious career choice, then student's attitude towards responsibilities in university, then social relationships on university, finally student's study habits. While Perger and Takaces, (2016) study, whose showed that students judged that supports for student's learning in classroom, to be the first most important factor, student's study habits, to be the second most important factor, conscious career choice was the

third most important of the eight factors, then practice-oriented education, then support by family and friends, then the assistance provided by the remedial courses, then student's attitude towards responsibilities in university, finally social relationships on university.

The result of the factor faculty staff support study showed six factors of characteristic of effective teacher or instructor which contribute to support student at faculty. This is because teachers are responsible for the overall direction, education and management of programming, evaluating, reporting, and designing interventions for all students within the classroom. Therefore, any and all activities that support staff is assigned to carry out must be directed and monitored by a teacher or other teaching professional. Dimensions that divided into six: personality characteristic, subject matter expertise, relation with students, professional competence, teaching style, and classroom management style.

The findings of the result showed that the students judged relation with students to be the first most important factor, professional competence to be the second most important, classroom management style was the third most important of the six factors, teaching style to be the fourth most important, personality characteristic to be the second lately important, subject matter expertise to be the lately important factor.

While, Calaguas and Glenn, (2013) study, whose showed that students judged personality characteristic to be the first most important factor, subject matter expertise to be the second most important, classroom management style was the third most important of the six factors, relation with students to be the fourth most important, teaching style to

be the second lately important, and professional competence to be the lately important factor.

The finding of the study revealed that the majority of students had high level of self-efficacy. This may be because the students judged for items, to be had high percent. These items were if students have adequate effort, they will success to solve hard problem, easy for their to stick to their plan and achieve their goals, and because they are smart they can figure things out when something unexpected happens.

Further, a much related study was conducted by **Okundi, (2014)** study, who reported that self-efficacy theory states that the level and strength of self-efficacy will determine whether or not behavior will be initiated, how much effort will result, and how long the effort will be sustained in the face of obstacles.

**Goulao, (2014)** study, who stated that to determine that students make life decisions based on their perceived self-efficacy by undertaking activities and choosing situations we deem to be within their capabilities for success activities associated with failure are avoided. When humans have a strong sense of perceived self-efficacy, they put forth a larger effort to complete a task despite the obstacles they meet than those who have a weak sense of self-efficacy.

According to **Shukulaku, (2013)** study, who showed that confident individuals anticipate successful outcomes? Students confident in their social skills anticipate successful social encounters. Those confident in their academic skills expect high marks on exams and expect the quality of their work to reap personal and professional benefits.

**Schwarzer, (2015)** study, who showed that individuals with high self-efficacy attempt challenging tasks more often, persist longer at them, and exert more effort, because of beliefs individuals hold about their abilities and the outcomes of their efforts to powerfully influence the

way in which they behave, knowledge and skill. **Lilian, (2012)** study, who said that the task will be avoided if it is perceived to be too difficult. Although inefficient individuals usually avoid challenging tasks, when they do attempt them they give up more easily than individuals with high efficacy.

Present result clarifies that more than half of nursing students had very good grade, while one third of them had excellent grade and minority of them had pass grade and fail grade. This may be due to presence of factor of success as support by family and friends, good social relationships in university, good student's study habits, and student attitude towards responsibilities in university, faculty staff support that members of faculty gives support to student for success, and increasing self-efficacy of students.

The present study revealed that there was positive relationship between factors of success, faculty staff support, student self-efficacy and academic achievement of all nursing students at fourth academic year. This result may be due to nursing students' academic achievement depends not only on the quality of the program of study and classroom instruction, but also on the efficiency of key out-of-class services that faculty staff have created to support nursing students' academic success: support programs that join nursing students' with learning and sense of awareness nursing students' of direction that lead to high self-efficacy.

The present result of the study revealed that statistical positive correlation between factor of success and academic achievement. This may be due to the quality assurance system department at the end of the final examination measure nursing student satisfaction regard each course and compare this with academic achievement and continuous improvement.



**Beauvais et al., (2014)** study, whose showed that factors are expect and promote academic success, in a large, urban comm-unity college region, claimed that the individual factor have the largest impact on at-risk nursing students on academic achievement: academic preparation, flexibility, assurance to educational goals, perception of progress toward educational goals, willingness to find academic assistance, self-confidence, and reasons for pursuing a college degree.

**Nazir, (2012)** study, findings indicated that all the factors to students, faculties, home and teacher have an extensive effect on the academic performance of the student respondents. Student-teacher relationship is the key to humanistic nursing education. This relationship should be well defined and based on sound professi-onalism which includes aspects such as professional caring, wholeness, confidence, integrity and reassurance from both the teacher and the student.

**Raman, (2013)** study, who noted that home support plays a vital role in the achievement of students. finding concerning the influence of home to student performance that lack of support from home leads to decline in the academic achievement of students. This normally happens in urban areas where most working parents are too busy to care for their student's performance.

On the other hand, **Nyoroge and Nyabuto, (2014)** study, whose said that there are student-related factors identified in this study that have an extensive effect on the academic performance of the student nurses. These include attitude, desire for good grades, study habits, focus, priorities and motivation, which talks on the impact of self-motivation to the grades of students. In the present result study revealed that there was statistical positive correlation between faculty support and academic

achievement. This may be due to presence of faculty staff that had good personality characteristics, had subject matter expertise, had good staff relation with students, had good teaching style, had good professional competence, and had good Classroom management style. As well as, faculty staff encourages nursing students to ask questions, present information clearly, clarify information that is not understood, provide study guidance, set challenging but attainable goals, and helpful in new situations.

**Al-Hussami et al., (2011)** study, whose found that nursing students identified certain qualities that supportive faculty should hold in order to advance success in nursing students, getting to know the nursing student personally, and treating the nursing student like an individual with needs and requirements. The faculty staff should be encouraging and make the students feels comfortable; be caring; show empathy; be available; and organized. As well as **Elsayed et al., (2013)** study, whose found that the nursing students' perception of perceived faculty support may have produced an atmosphere more contributing to academic achievement and encouraged students to continue

On the same line of this study result **Betlehem, (2011)** study, who studied the nursing student success in an associate degree program, revealed that positive correlation between faculty support and academic achieve-ment? Also, **Wold et al., (2010)** study, whose studied the teacher-student relationships and found that perceived support from teachers have impact on academic achievement, interest in faculties, attendance, faculty belonging and self-esteem, contributed most to the educational outcomes and goal attainment for the students.

On the other hand, this result was inconsistent with the present study **Frost's, (2010)** study, which examined that causal attributions self-efficacy and perceived faculty support at university

Rhode Island, and noted that faculty support and did not expect academic achievement.

The present result of the study revealed that statistical positive correlation between student self-efficacy and academic achievement. In the fact presence of quality reassurance department in the nursing faculty placed a great importance on improving the quality of academic programs and the quality of graduates. As well as, faculty staff have insight toward nursing students' and reflect on adapting a variety of teaching approaches for all nursing students, keeping in mind the exclusive attributes of each nursing student. This may then lead to high self-efficacy.

The finding of the present study is supported with **Guntern et al., (2017)** study, who reported that self-efficacy positively correlated to academic achievement measures such as grades, scores on exams and base work performances. As well as, he proved self-efficacy is a strong predictor of academic achievement.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the foregoing findings and discussion, it can be concluded that this investigation has revealed overwhelming data-based evidence. Contributing factors were covered at different factors: factors of success, perceived faculty staff support and student self-efficacy. Finding revealed that there was majority of students had high perception level regarding factors of success, perceived faculty staff support and student self-efficacy, there was a statistical significant positive correlation between factors of success, perceived faculty staff support, student self-efficacy and student achievement.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the finding obtained from the present study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- The results of the study should be reported to the head of quality assurance department of continuous improvement in the quality of education to assess the needs of nursing students
- Faculty can also foster students' habits by running courses in learning strategy. The role of lecturers is important in deciding on the subject matter of these courses.
- Conscious career choice can be facilitated by orientation programs for students and they will be committed to a specific degree program which can in turn contribute to the completion of their studies and choosing appropriated job.
- Faculty members should encourage students to participate nursing students in this differential educational teaching
- Create high-attainment environments through the policy flexibility of the faculty to meet the needs of nursing students.
- Improve the efficiency of nursing students through different teaching methods and applying of skills mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and social persuasions in education.

### **Further researches are suggestion**

- It is needed to identify the other factors to advance academic achievement as motivation, self-esteem and time management.
- Additional research must be conducted about factors affecting on nursing student to poor or hinder academic achievement as stress and anxiety.
- Relationship between faculty staff support and self-efficacy of student.
- Replication of the study on a larger probability sample is highly recommended to achieve generalizable results.

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