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ACADEMIC MOTIVATION OF NURSING STUDENTS IN NURSING COLLEGES: CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDIES

Original Research

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ABSTRACT

Background: Motivation plays a pivotal role in shaping professional choices, influencing students' perceptions, learning engagement, and academic achievement. Although extensively studied in various educational contexts, limited research in Pakistan has examined the association between academic motivation and achievement, particularly among nursing students. Understanding these relationships is essential to enhance educational strategies and address factors that either foster or hinder motivation in this field.

Objective: To assess the level of academic motivation among nursing students and determine its association with demographic characteristics.

Methods: A cross-sectional analytical study was conducted among 104 Bachelor of Science in Nursing students enrolled in two nursing colleges in Lahore. Participants were selected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Academic motivation was measured using a standardized and culturally adapted 29-item questionnaire, including 28 items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Data were collected in a supervised setting, allowing 30 minutes for completion. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS, applying chi-square tests to assess associations between academic motivation levels and demographic factors, with $p < 0.05$ considered significant.

Results: Of the participants, 37.4% were demotivated, 11.6% were neutral, and 51.0% were motivated towards the nursing profession. Significant associations were found between academic motivation and semester ($p < 0.05$), CGPA ($p < 0.05$), and choice of profession ($p < 0.05$). No significant associations were observed with gender, parental support, pre-schooling background, or societal acceptance ($p > 0.05$). Students who willingly chose nursing and those with higher academic achievement demonstrated notably higher motivation scores.

Conclusion: Academic motivation among nursing students is positively influenced by voluntary career choice and higher academic achievement. Addressing socio-cultural barriers and promoting autonomy in career decision-making can enhance motivation and improve educational outcomes in nursing education.

Keywords: Academic Motivation, Cross-Sectional Studies, Demography, Nursing Education, Pakistan, Professional Choice, Students Nursing.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the role of motivation in shaping professional choices has gained increasing attention. Numerous studies have explored how motivation influences students' perceptions of life and their academic performance, demonstrating its significance in educational and career development (1). Within the broader framework of positive psychology, academic motivation has been examined alongside constructs such as life satisfaction, optimism, and personal well-being, all of which contribute to a "good life" and improved living conditions (2). Despite these insights, there remains a notable gap in literature regarding the relationship between academic motivation and academic achievement in Pakistan, particularly in the context of undergraduate nursing education. Contemporary students face considerable pressure to excel academically, especially in highly competitive professional domains such as medicine, engineering, and other specialized fields. While some research has found no consistent correlation between motivation and academic outcomes (3), other studies have identified several factors that influence career choices, especially among medical students. A prominent factor is the influence of parents—often decisive in career selection due to their role in financing education—which may override students' personal preferences (4). This trend is observed in both developed and developing contexts, although self-financing students tend to have greater autonomy in their career decisions (5).

Academic achievement, commonly assessed through cumulative GPA, degree completion, and ongoing evaluations, reflects the extent to which individuals or institutions meet their educational goals (6). However, consensus on its precise measurement is lacking. Moreover, barriers such as limited career guidance, perceived educational obstacles, and socio-cultural constraints can diminish students' self-efficacy, while resilience and positive social perceptions can enhance it (7). Understanding how these factors interact with academic motivation is essential for improving student outcomes. While research on motivation and academic performance is abundant in certain disciplines, no published studies have specifically examined academic motivation among Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN, 4-year program) students in Pakistan. This lack of evidence limits the ability of educators and policymakers to design targeted interventions that foster motivation and, consequently, improve academic achievement in this group. Furthermore, as positive psychology suggests, cognitive constructs such as hope and optimism play an important role in goal attainment and life satisfaction, underscoring the importance of motivational factors in educational success (8-10). Given these considerations, the present study seeks to address this knowledge gap by determining the association between academic motivation and various demographic characteristics among nursing students at nursing colleges. This objective aims not only to quantify levels of academic motivation but also to identify demographic influences that could inform strategies to enhance student engagement and achievement.

METHODS

This study was conducted at the Nursing Department of Allama Iqbal Medical College, Lahore, over a period of five months following the approval of the research synopsis. A cross-sectional analytical study design was employed, targeting a total sample size of 104 nursing students. Participants were selected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Inclusion criteria comprised students currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN, 4-year) program, present during the data collection period, and willing to participate. Students who were on academic leave, had already graduated, or declined consent were excluded from the study. Academic motivation was assessed using a standardized and well-validated 29-item questionnaire, which included 28 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," and one additional item related to general academic interest. The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS-C 28) was adapted in accordance with established guidelines to ensure cultural and contextual relevance (11,12). Each participant was provided with clear instructions and allocated 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire in a quiet, supervised environment to minimize distractions. Data collection was carried out under strict ethical protocols. Approval was granted by the Institutional Ethics Committee of Allama Iqbal Medical College, ensuring adherence to national and institutional ethical standards. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with no identifying information recorded on the questionnaires. Completed forms were stored in a secure, password-protected database accessible only to authorized research personnel.

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RESULTS

The results of the study were based on data collected from 104 nursing students. The gender distribution indicated that 37 participants (35.4%) were male, while 67 participants (64.6%) were female. Regarding the current semester, 48 students (46.2%) were enrolled in semesters 3–4, 45 students (43.3%) in semesters 5–6, and 11 students (10.5%) in semesters 7–8. The cumulative GPA analysis revealed that 11 students (10.6%) were in the third-class category, 49 students (47.1%) in the second lower class, 38 students (36.5%) in the second upper class, and 6 students (5.8%) in the first-class category. Parental support for education was reported by 87 students (83.3%), while 17 students (16.7%) indicated they did not have full parental support. Educational background analysis showed that 74 participants (71.2%) had completed their matriculation and intermediate education in the private sector, while 30 participants (28.8%) had completed these from public sector institutions. In terms of professional choice, 64 students (61.5%) reported that they had chosen the nursing profession themselves, whereas 40 students (38.5%) indicated that their parents had made the decision. Social acceptance of the nursing profession was affirmed by 88 participants (84.4%), while 16 participants (15.6%) reported that it was not considered acceptable in their communities. Statistical analysis of demographic characteristics showed that the lowest mean value (1.15) was observed for societal acceptance of the nursing profession, while the highest mean value (2.38) was recorded for cumulative GPA. Median and mode values were lowest at 1 for variables such as parental support, pre-schooling background, choice of profession, and societal acceptance, and highest at 2 for gender and GPA. Standard deviations varied from 0.363 for societal acceptance to 0.753 for GPA. The academic motivation assessment, based on the standardized 28-item Academic Motivation Scale, indicated that 54.8% of students demonstrated high academic motivation, while 45.1% were classified as having low academic motivation. Detailed response analysis showed that across all items, 8.97% of students strongly disagreed, 13.9% disagreed, 14.6% slightly disagreed, 11.6% were neutral, 19.5% slightly agreed, 18.3% agreed, and 13.1% strongly agreed with the given statements. Aggregated results demonstrated that 51% of students were motivated, 37.4% were demotivated, and 11.6% maintained a neutral stance towards their academic motivation in the nursing profession.

Table 1: Demographics factors frequency

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Valid %
Gender	Male	37	35.4%
	Female	67	64.6%
	Total	104	100%
Semester	3–4 (Second year)	48	46.2%
	5–6 (Third year)	45	43.3%
	7–8 (Final year)	11	10.5%
	Total	104	100%
CGPA	Third class	11	10.6%
	Second lower class	49	47.1%
	Second upper class	38	36.5%
	First class	6	5.8%
	Total	104	100%
Parent Support	Yes	87	83.3%
	No	17	16.7%
	Total	104	100%
Pre-Schooling	Private sector	74	71.2%
	Public sector	30	28.8%
	Total	104	100%
Choice to Select Nursing Profession	Self	64	61.5%
	Parents	40	38.5%
	Total	104	100%
Socially Acceptable	Yes	88	84.4%
	No	16	15.6%
	Total	104	100%

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Table 2: Demographics factors Statistics

	Gender of the Participants	Semester	CGPA	Parents support	Pre-Schooling	Choice to select nursing profession	Socially Acceptable
N	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
Mean	1.64	1.64	2.38	1.16	1.29	1.38	1.15
Median	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Mode	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
Std. D	.481	.667	.753	.372	.455	.489	.363
Variance	.231	.445	.567	.138	.207	.239	.131

Table 3: Academic Motivation

Sr. No.	Items	1 f%	2 f%	3 f%	4 f%	5 f%	6 f%	7 f%
1	Because with only a nursing degree I would find a high-paying job later on?	10 9.6%	25 24%	8 7.7%	10 9.6%	6 5.8%	20 19.2%	25 24%
2	Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things?	9 8.7%	15 14.4%	16 15.4%	9 8.7%	12 11.5%	26 25%	17 16.3%
3	Because I think that a nursing, education will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen?	6 5.8%	25 24%	20 19.2%	12 11.5%	18 17.3%	14 13.5%	9 8.7%
4	For the intense feelings I experience when I am communicating my own ideas to others?	11 10.6%	17 16.3%	19 18.3%	12 11.5%	14 13.5%	21 20.2%	10 9.6%
5	Honestly, I don't know; I really feel that I am wasting my time in school?	9 8.7%	15 14.4%	19 18.3%	14 13.5%	18 17.3%	17 16.3%	12 11.5%
6	For the pleasure I experience while surpassing myself in my studies?	9 8.7%	19 18.3%	16 15.4%	12 11.5%	24 23.1%	16 15.4%	8 7.7%
7	To prove to myself that I am capable of completing my college (CEGEP) degree?	6 5.8%	15 14.4%	13 12.5%	15 14.4%	25 24%	21 20.2%	9 8.7%
8	In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on?	9 8.7%	17 16.3%	19 18.3%	11 10.6%	14 13.5%	20 19.2%	14 13.5%
9	For the pleasure I experience when I discover new things never seen before?	6 5.8%	15 14.4%	21 20.2%	10 9.6%	23 22.1%	16 15.4%	13 12.5%
10	Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like?	11 10.6%	12 11.5%	7 6.7%	7 6.7%	23 22.1%	16 15.4%	28 26.9%
11	For the pleasure that I experience when I read interesting authors?	18 17.3%	10 9.6%	13 12.5%	8 7.7%	15 14.4%	24 23.1%	16 15.4%
12	I once had good reasons for going to college, however, now I wonder whether I should continue?	7 6.7%	14 13.5%	3 2.9%	43 41.3%	14 13.5%	13 12.5%	10 9.6%
13	For the pleasure that I experience while I am surpassing myself in one of my personal accomplishments?	11 10.6%	18 17.3%	12 11.5%	12 11.5%	13 12.5%	21 20.2%	17 16.3%
14	Because of the fact that when I succeed in college (CEGEP) I feel important?	14 13.5%	12 11.5%	19 18.3%	22 21.2%	19 18.3%	16 15.4%	12 11.5%
15	Because I want to have "the good life" later on?	14 13.5%	18 17.3%	14 13.5%	11 10.6%	28 26.9%	14 13.5%	5 4.8%

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Sr. No.	Items	1 f%	2 f%	3 f%	4 f%	5 f%	6 f%	7 f%
16	For the pleasure that I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which appeal to me?	7 6.7%	10 9.6%	16 15.4%	13 12.5%	29 27.9%	14 13.5%	15 14.4%
17	Because this will help me make a better choice regarding my career orientation?	5 4.8%	17 16.3%	19 18.3%	15 14.4%	15 14.4%	11 10.6%	21 20.2%
18	For the pleasure that I experience when I feel completely absorbed by what certain authors have written?	7 6.7%	10 9.6%	6 5.8%	5 4.8%	31 29.8%	38 36.5%	7 6.7%
19	I can't see why I go to college (CEGEP) and frankly, I couldn't care less?	1 .99%	1 .99%	6 5.8%	16 15.4%	40 38.5%	17 16.3%	23 22.1%
20	For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities?	7 6.7%	4 3.8%	11 10.6%	13 12.5%	22 21.2%	38 36.5%	9 8.7%
21	To show myself that I am an intelligent person?	9 8.7%	32 30.5%	20 19.2%	5 4.8%	16 15.4%	16 15.4%	6 5.8%
22	In order to have a better salary later on?	13 12.5%	14 13.5%	17 16.3%	15 14.4%	23 22.1%	17 16.3%	5 4.8%
23	Because my studies allow me to continue to learn about many things that interest me?	10 9.6%	12 11.5%	8 7.7%	10 9.6%	24 23.1%	20 19.2%	20 19.2%
24	Because I believe that a few additional years of education will improve my competence as a worker?	22 21.2%	7 6.7%	21 20.2%	16 15.4%	17 16.3%	18 17.3%	3 2.9%
25	For the "high" feeling that I experience while reading about various interesting subjects?	5 4.8%	11 10.6%	34 32.4%	15 14.4%	18 17.3%	14 13.5%	7 6.7%
26	I don't know; I can't understand what I am doing in school?	11 10.6%	13 12.5%	9 8.7%	9 8.7%	37 35.6%	12 11.5%	13 12.5%
27	Because college, allows me to experience a personal satisfaction in my quest for excellence in my studies?	8 7.7%	11 10.6%	27 26%	8 7.7%	15 14.4%	14 13.5%	21 20.2%
28	Because I want to show myself that I can succeed in my studies?	6 5.8%	19 18.3%	15 14.4%	15 14.4%	16 15.4%	28 26.9%	5 4.8%
Academic motivation		Demotivated			Neutral	Motivated		
		37.4%			11.6%	51%		
Total		8.9%	13.9%	14.6%	11.6%	19.5%	18.3%	13.1%

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Neither agree nor disagree, 5 = Slightly Agree, 6 = Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree

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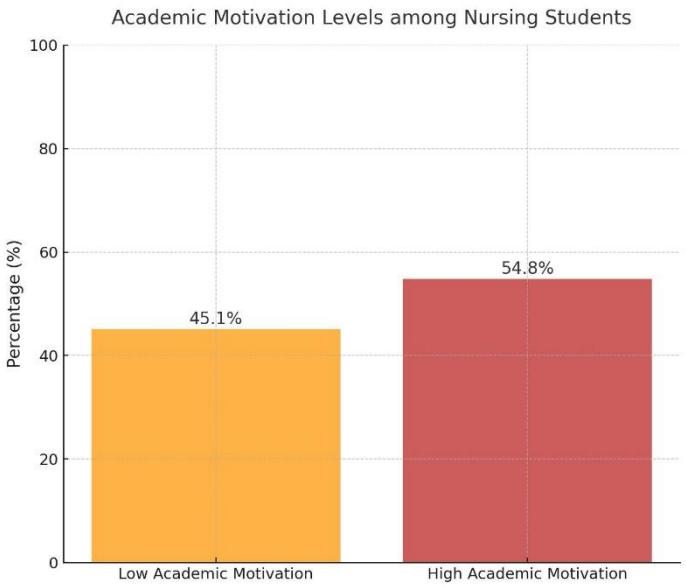


Figure 1 Academic Motivation Levels Among Nursing Students

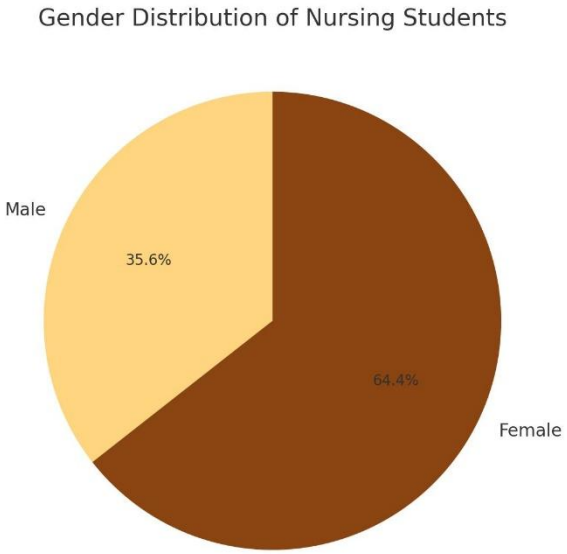


Figure 2 Gender Distribution of Nursing Students

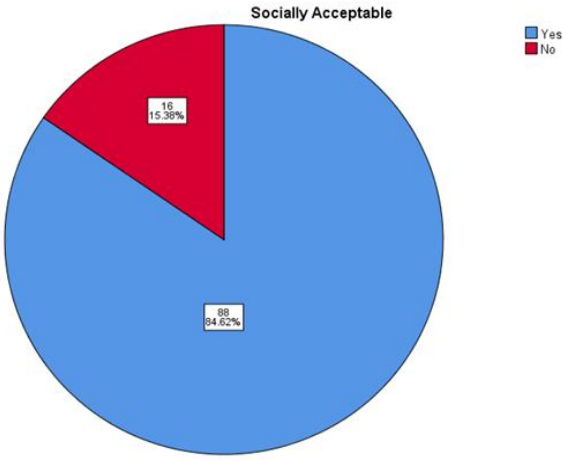


Figure 3 Socially Acceptable

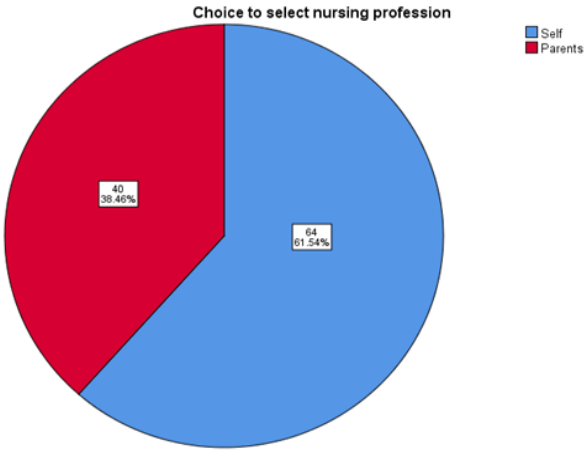


Figure 4 Choice to Select Nursing Profession

DISCUSSION

The present study explored academic motivation among nursing students, its association with demographic characteristics, and the influence of parental choice on this association. The findings indicated that nursing students' understanding of academic motivation aligned with established definitions in literature, portraying it as an inner process that is purposeful and influenced by both internal and external demographic factors. Academic motivation functioned as a driving force for achieving objectives, enhancing learning, and facilitating educational success. The hypothesis that academic motivation is associated with demographic characteristics was supported,

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with statistically significant associations observed between motivation and academic semester, cumulative GPA, and choice of profession ($p < 0.05$). No significant associations were found between motivation and gender, parental support, pre-schooling background, or social acceptance ($p > 0.05$). Overall, 51% of participants were classified as motivated, 11% as neutral, and 38% as demotivated. These results are consistent with previous research reporting moderate to high motivation levels among nursing students, with similar proportions of motivated students (13,14). Existing literature supports the relationship between academic motivation and academic achievement, indicating that students with higher motivation demonstrate improved performance and reduced dropout rates (14,15). Prior studies have also shown that willingness in choosing a profession is an important determinant of motivation, and the current findings corroborate this, as students who voluntarily selected the nursing profession had significantly higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation scores compared to those who entered unwillingly. Similar trends have been documented in other contexts, where intrinsic motivation is enhanced when career choice aligns with personal interest (16).

The study also reflected established patterns in the literature regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation, driven by enjoyment and interest in learning, was identified as a powerful factor in academic engagement, while extrinsic motivation, linked to future career prospects and financial independence, remained an important complementary driver (17,18). The higher extrinsic motivation scores observed among participants were likely influenced by expectations of job security and professional opportunities post-graduation. Additionally, students with higher academic achievement had lower amotivation scores and higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels, reaffirming the role of motivation as a determinant of academic success. In terms of semester-based differences, although senior students demonstrated higher motivation scores, the difference was not statistically significant. Some previous studies have found significant differences between freshman and senior cohorts, suggesting that variations in curriculum structure, academic workload, and exposure to clinical experiences may play a role (19-21). The absence of statistical significance in this study may be attributed to the sample size or institutional factors. A notable strength of the study was its use of a validated academic motivation scale, allowing for standardized assessment and comparison with other research. The findings also provide valuable insight into the motivational dynamics specific to nursing students in the local context, highlighting both intrinsic and extrinsic contributors.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The sample was limited to nursing students from two institutions, restricting generalizability. The relatively small sample size may have reduced the power to detect smaller differences or associations. The cross-sectional design prevents causal inference, and self-reported measures may be subject to response bias. Additionally, the study did not compare nursing students with peers from other healthcare or non-healthcare disciplines, which could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the role of motivation across academic fields. Future research should involve larger, more diverse samples, incorporating students from multiple universities and academic disciplines. Longitudinal designs would help establish causal relationships between motivation and academic outcomes, while qualitative components could deepen understanding of the underlying factors influencing motivation. Furthermore, targeted interventions to enhance intrinsic motivation, particularly among students who enter nursing due to external pressures, could be evaluated for their effectiveness in improving academic performance and retention (22,23). Overall, the findings underscore the multifaceted nature of academic motivation, shaped by personal choice, academic performance, and demographic factors. Addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, while fostering autonomy in career decision-making, may enhance student engagement and lead to better educational outcomes in nursing education.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that academic motivation among nursing students is closely linked to key demographic factors, with higher achievement levels and voluntary choice of the nursing profession associated with stronger motivation. Findings highlight that intrinsic engagement is enhanced when students willingly pursue nursing, while external influences such as parental imposition, limited social acceptance, and certain educational backgrounds can hinder motivation and academic success. These results underscore the importance of fostering autonomy in career decisions, creating supportive academic environments, and addressing socio-cultural barriers to enhance both motivation and performance in nursing education.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Author	Contribution
Nadia Shoukat*	Substantial Contribution to study design, analysis, acquisition of Data Manuscript Writing Has given Final Approval of the version to be published
Sajjal Kainat	Substantial Contribution to study design, acquisition and interpretation of Data Critical Review and Manuscript Writing Has given Final Approval of the version to be published
Sara Emmanuel	Substantial Contribution to acquisition and interpretation of Data Has given Final Approval of the version to be published
Aqsa Hafeez	Contributed to Data Collection and Analysis Has given Final Approval of the version to be published
Faheema Naz	Contributed to Data Collection and Analysis Has given Final Approval of the version to be published
Shamaila Naz	Substantial Contribution to study design and Data Analysis Has given Final Approval of the version to be published

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