

# Relationship between English Proficiency and Academic Performance among Nursing Undergraduates in a Defence University, Sri Lanka; A Correlational Study

WS Sudusinghe, WGC Kumara, and GPK Gamage

*Department of Languages, Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities, KDU, Sri Lanka*

*Department of Nursing & Midwifery, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, KDU, Sri Lanka*

#<sudusinghews@kdu.ac.lk>

**Abstract** –English as a second language (ESL) has gained much popularity during the past decades, especially in nursing education. Previous studies suggest that English language proficiency is an essential factor in determining the academic success of nursing students. This study aimed to assess the relationship between English proficiency and academic performance among nursing undergraduates in General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), Sri Lanka. The study was a descriptive correlational study conducted among all the nursing undergraduates (N=59) studying in the first two academic years in KDU. The English proficiency was assessed by the marks obtained for the English language in the last semester-end examination, and the academic performance was assessed with the Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA) obtained for the same semester. The descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient test, and independent t-test were used to analyse data in SPSS 23.0 version. The mean ( $\pm$ SD) age of the participants was 22.19 ( $\pm$ 2.90) years. The majority of the participants were females (74.6%). The average English marks score was  $56.62 \pm 7.65$ . There was no significant correlation between English marks and SGPA ( $p > 0.05$ ) among the study participants. Female undergraduates had statistically significantly high English marks than male undergraduates ( $p = 0.008$ ). Further, second-year undergraduates had statistically high English marks than the first-year undergraduates ( $p = 0.000$ ). However, SGPA was not significantly different between both genders and two academic years ( $p > 0.05$ ). The study revealed that the correlation between English language proficiency and academic performance was not significant. Further research is needed to assess the factors associated with academic performance.

**Keywords:** English proficiency, Academic performance, Nursing undergraduates