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## A LITERATURE REVIEW ON FACTORS AFFECTING THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS IN A SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

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### ABSTRACT

*This article explores various cutting-edge strategies Sri Lanka might use to modernize its nursing curriculum in order to tackle contemporary issues. Employers search the world over for nursing experts who have the skills necessary to meet the modern requirements of the world healthcare system. It is now vital to enhance nursing education in order to extend its focus, deliver more remarkable patient care, and increase the retention and persistence of the students. Nursing students in Sri Lankan institutions place a premium on academic achievement. Meanwhile, many factors that impact nursing students' academic success have been studied, yet many issues still exist. The current study employed a review technique to examine the literature on undergraduate nursing students' academic performance in a Sri Lankan university context, as well as numerous factors influencing nursing students' performance. The relevant literature for the article was gathered from the Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), PubMed, and Google Scholar. The search was restricted to the English language. The paper illustrates how both internal and external factors have an impact on academic performance and outlines measures to enhance the grades of nursing students. Internal factors include student-related factors, while external factors include teacher-related, institutional-related, and home-related factors. The student-related factors were investigated by allowing the students themselves to understand the factors and implement actions to improve their academic performance. Teachers play a major role in enhancing performance. This could be done by allowing them to identify problems encountered by students that impact their performance. The relevant educational institutions can promote different workshops and activities to enhance the thinking skills of students, as well as help teachers, understand the influences of their student's preferred learning methods that will enhance their performances. Parents can identify the matters that pertain to the studies of their children and enhance their performance by giving them support. The study has the benefit of identifying the factors affecting performance and giving suggestions for producing intelligent and skilled nursing graduates for the nation.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Internal, External, Academic, Performance, Nursing Education*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The goal of education is to empower students through social transformation and to provide them with access to information (Noro et al., 2015). Due to the impact of global economic and sociopolitical variables, it is subject to regular changes (Li, 2016; Rodrigues et al., 2016). Education in the field of health care is no exception; in fact, it is a crucial component of higher education that needs to be updated to reflect contemporary world trends.

Formal nursing education started in 1939 and was influenced by the British nursing tradition. It opened the door for the apprenticeship concept to be incorporated into Sri Lankan hospital-based nursing education. But this approach was also the main driver behind splitting apart nursing schools to provide more specialized training. As a result, under the direction of the Ministry of Health, 11 nursing schools in Sri Lanka currently offer a 3-year general nursing education program, with more than 1000 nurses graduating from these programs each year. In addition to midwifery and clinical specialties like Mental Health Nursing, Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health (MOH) provides a broad range of post-registration education and training for nurses.

It is now evolving to have more nurses who are qualified with a bachelor's degree due to the lack of policies that address training infrastructure, accreditation procedures, curriculum development, modification, or faculty shortages (MOH, 2017). A four-year pre-registration degree program leading to a BSc in nursing was developed by the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka after comprehensive assessments of the proposals made by innovative nursing leaders and authorities at five state universities in nursing (Jayasekara and Amarasekara, 2015). On-site and online nursing degree programs are offered in English (UGC, 2017).

Only a small percentage of Sri Lankan nurses (approximately 1%) have degrees beyond a bachelor's (De Silva & Rolls 2010). Most nurses with graduate degrees work for universities or have left the

country. Government, donor organizations, and private (personal) sources of finance for higher education outside of Sri Lanka are scarce (Jayasekera & Amarasekera 2015). However, less emphasis is placed on research, evidence-based practice, therapeutic communication skills, exposure to cutting-edge technology, and computer literacy in Sri Lanka's current nursing curriculum. A few private universities have recently started awarding applicants who have finished the BSc degree with a Master's degree in nursing. Nursing education in Sri Lanka has reached a significant milestone, with nursing PhD holders contributing their knowledge to the improvement of nursing education in both local and global contexts.

In Sri Lanka, there aren't enough nurses to care for all the patients. If nursing education is improved and updated in Sri Lanka, these modifications will inspire more people to pursue careers in nursing. Additionally, Sri Lankan nurses can expand their services both domestically and abroad if they have access to internationally recognized nursing education and training. Therefore, some of the key initiatives that can be adopted in Sri Lanka include raising English proficiency, improving therapeutic communication skills, and establishing a holistic approach to nursing education and patient care. Furthermore, it is suggested that methods for multiple intelligences, learning styles, emotional intelligence, and enhancing counseling skills are essential interventions.

Educational institutions are worthless without students. Any educational institution relies heavily on its students. Universities' most valuable asset is their students. It has a significant impact on the quality of education, and human wealth as well as on personality development and performance, all of which ultimately contribute to the improvement of human living standards (Feenberg, 2012). The performance of students is crucial in creating high-quality graduates who will serve as outstanding leaders and highly skilled personnel for the country, and thus is strongly tied to a country's social and

economic progress. Students must put forth the

maximum effort in their studies to get excellent marks and to prepare themselves for prospects in their careers. Therefore, nursing programs throughout the globe utilize a range of metrics to assess nursing students' academic achievement. One dominant method is assessing the grade point average (GPA). Academic performance refers to the capacity to learn and recall things, as well as the ability to communicate the acquired knowledge verbally or in writing. According to Annie, Howard & Mildred (1996, p.2-5) "Academic performance is defined as the outcome of education; the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution has achieved their educational goals". It is a key feature in education because the way of student learns and how they approach their learning situations is unique to every individual student (Abewardhana et al., 2019). Academic achievement is a criterion for evaluating and comparing students (Almigbal, 2015). It is a significant criterion utilized by academic institutions to assess the quality of education. According to Minnesota (2007), "the academic achievement of graduate students determines higher education success.

Especially, nursing students have lower self-consciousness and psychological resilience than working people because of their minimal social interactions, making them more sensitive to psychological issues (Bask & Salmela Aro, 2013). Therefore, academic achievement has been shown to positively predict life satisfaction in university nursing students (Xiao, Tang, & Shim, 2009). Furthermore, academic achievement is the critical criterion used to assess the success of a student's university life. Therefore, there have been several efforts to increase nursing students' academic achievement, and there has been a substantial amount of study on student academic performance and the different factors that impact it.

A student's academic success is influenced by a variety of factors. Students learning capabilities are mostly affected by their thinking skills if they do not learn what they need to study. If teachers do not know how to get a student's attention, the student will

struggle to pay attention to the material. The student becomes sluggish because he or she is studying a subject that they or believe is unrelated to their course; nonetheless, they or continue to study it.? However, the goal of the BSc nursing program is to develop professional and trained nurses who can use their knowledge and abilities in the field. Therefore, nurse educators must look for ways to improve our current techniques and practices to help students succeed. To accomplish this, it is necessary to get a deeper understanding of the elements that determine nursing students' academic achievement. This will aid in academic achievement and, as a result, have an impact on outcomes such as retention, attrition, and graduation rates. As a result, a limited narrative literature review was conducted to identify factors impacting nursing undergraduates' academic performance. The usefulness of this research aids in the implementation of remedial procedures that will assist students in enhancing their academic performance. Therefore, the main goal of this literature review was to investigate the factors that influence the academic performance of nursing undergraduates in a university setting, to aid in the advancement of both students and teachers.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), PubMed, and Google Scholar were used to find the pertinent literature for this article. Since it was impossible to locate relevant publications in Tamil or Sinhala, the search was limited to English-language resources published until 2020 and related to the subject of the present study.

The studies that explored the factors affecting the academic performance that focused on nursing students were included and the keywords used to identify the relevant sources were: "nursing education", "nursing students", "adjustability", "study habits", "motivation", "self-efficacy", "stress and coping", "learning styles", "resilience", "English language skills", "family support", "academic support" and "institutional support". Boolean operators (AND, OR, and NOT) were used to combine the search on the above key terms. The duplicated studies were excluded.

Title and abstract reading were done first in the search and study selection procedure, followed by the comprehensive reading of the chosen paper. The literature references listed in the chosen studies were looked up both backward and forwards.

### **3. RESULTS**

50 articles were found in the initial search. After the first screening, 10 articles were removed due to duplication, and 9 were found to be unrelated. The six papers were not accessible when the review was conducted in terms of the availability of the full articles. Finally, 6 other papers were deleted, and 25 were studied after the study of the articles. The retrieved literature related to the factors that may affect nursing students' academic performance was categorized into four sections. The first section defines and describes student-related factors in the literature within the nursing education context. The second section explains and provides examples of the teacher-related factors that influence the academic development of nursing students. The institutional-related factors are described and illustrated in the third section. The final section defines and provides a description of the aspects of the home that affect students' academic achievement.

#### **Student- related Factors or Personal Conditions**

Students' efforts, age, and self-motivation, as well as learning preferences, entrance qualifications, and prior school experience, were all identified as student-related factors. Furthermore, student-related factors such as adjustment, attitude, desire for high grades, study habits, attention, priorities, and motivation have been identified as having a considerable influence on the academic achievement of student nurses (Kusurkar et al., 2012).

#### **Adjustability**

Starting university is a significant life step for many students. Students undergo a significant transition period at the time they start university life. It may be challenging to adjust to many changes at once, requiring support. Most of the students raised the fact

that they are confronted with numerous challenges due to adjusting to a new social situation.

Also, it may be incredibly stressful. Pre-existing mental health issues may be exacerbated for certain adolescents throughout this adjustment. These issues may remain or even worsen throughout their academic careers, affecting academic achievement (Auerbach et al., 2016; Mortier et al., 2015; Zivin et al., 2009). Others, on the other hand, may have psychopathology as a result of the stress of university life and adjusting to a new social situation (Eisenberg et al., 2007). Therefore, it is identified that adjustability is an important support need especially for newly recruited undergraduate students, to maintain student retention and persistence.

Many students are adjusting to university life while simultaneously adjusting to their journey into adulthood. Therefore, the first few months at university are said to be particularly difficult and stressful due to significant psychological adaptations (Conley et al., 2014). Moreover, a poor adjustment may be led to a decrease in their academic performance, an increase in fatigue, and a decrease their well-being. Furthermore, this severe issue is addressed a little in the university and this can negatively affect student outcomes and retention (Shields, 2011).

#### **Study Habits**

The most significant predictor variable for academic achievement appears to be study habits (Aluja et al., 2004; Boehler et al., 2001). Study habits are the capacity of students to manage their time for studies (Ozsoy et al., 2009). Further, study habits are students' techniques of studying, whether systematic, efficient, or inefficient (Ayodele & Adebisi, 2013). This means that effective study habits contribute to academic success, while inefficient study habits lead to failure. Several studies conducted throughout the world have found that there is a link between study habits and academic success (Bashir and Mattoo, 2012; Kurshid, Tanveer, and nas Quasmi, 2012).

According to a study conducted by Marquez (2009), a student who performs well in his chosen career has good study habits. It is also said that students should

apply these methods throughout their academic careers, and this inherent quality adds to the great academic achievement of nursing students. Alos et al. (2011) agreed with this, noting that a student who succeeds in his or her chosen profession has good study habits.

Study habits were also noted by Mashayehki et al. (2014) as a factor determining students' academic development. Dimkpa et al. (2013) investigated the causes of low academic performance among student nurses at Nigeria's Bayelsa State School of Nursing, and the findings concluded that students with good study habits assist others in grasping difficult topics, completing projects, and internalizing material in group studies. Moreover, another recent descriptive study conducted at a Philippine institution discovered that study habits have a substantial impact on student nurses' academic success. This demonstrates that academic achievement is largely determined by students' study habits. As a result, to improve education, students' study habits must be improved.

### **Motivation and Self-efficacy**

Academic burnout is prevalent among students in many disciplines of study, ranging from 10.3 percent to 76.8 percent (Mikaeili et al., 2013). This is affected by stress (Fares et al., 2016), student-teacher relationships (Abolghasemi, 2010), social support (Seo et al., 2015), emotional intelligence (Kang, 2015), endurance (Dyrbye et al., 2010), personal characteristics (Otero-López et al., 2015), motivation (Cazan, 2015), self-efficacy (Rahmati, 2015) and academic atmosphere (Brazeau et al., 2010). Among these factors, motivation and self-efficacy are the most important characteristics that appear to be useful in reducing the degree of academic burnout among students (Cazan, 2015; Rahmati, 2015).

Bandura (1999) defined self-efficacy as the "individual's perceived capability to perform in a way that creates regulation over events affecting his/her life" (p.?). It is described as how the person regulates his or her behaviour when interacting with the environment (Bandura, 1997). This controls human function through cognitive, motivational,

emotional, and decisive processes (Bandura & Locke, 2003). According to social cognitive theory, experiences, observational learning, social persuasion, and emotional arousal can lead to self-efficacy which helps individuals overcome obstacles and perform well in academics with confidence (Bandura, 1997). Another study carried out by Bernacki et al., (2015) revealed that self-efficacy thoughts are a motivating output, and when a person can deal with his or her issues, his or her self-efficacy rises, and he or she becomes more driven to attain academic achievement (Bernacki et al., 2015). Moreover, Richardson et al. (2012) highlight that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of academic performance and the results are in line with earlier reports on meta-analyses of the relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance (Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Robbins et al., 2004).

When it comes to motivation in the classroom, there are three types: internal, external, and no motivation. Internal motivation is the evaluation of students to study self-preferences and experience mastery of learning, whereas external motivation is the teacher's reinforcement, score, and other conditional rewards that are respected for students in the event of performance advancement. When a person is unable to express his or her desire to participate in a certain activity, it is stated that they lack motivation (Akomolafe et al., 2013; Reeve, 2014). Moreover, Green et al. (2012) depicted that learners' performance and academic progress may be improved by participating in class and performing assignments, and therefore, educational motivation was found to have favourable effects on learning, class engagement, and assignment completion in the class.

### **Stress and Coping**

Student life is a thrilling and hard time in one's life. During this time, all students must improve their mental health and self-confidence to succeed in academic life. Therefore, the psychological state of students has a significant role in their academic achievement. Psychological support is important to improve their emotional well-being and academic

performance during the undergraduate period. The prevalence of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety has increased among undergraduate students and these problems have been shown to have a negative influence on both emotional well-being and academic performance. Many aspects of the undergraduate experience, such as the transition from high school to university life, heavy workload, peer pressure, etc., contribute to mental health issues among the students. Stress is identified as a physiological and psychological response to a stressor that is perceived as difficult to adequately cope with by an individual (Lewis & Shaw, 2007). It has been reported that the prevalence of stress is common among nursing students (Chan et al., 2009) and it is acknowledged as one of the most essential and persisting issues in nursing education. The prevalence of stress is relatively high among BSc nursing undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Several studies have demonstrated that more than half of the nursing student population has reported mild to severe symptoms of stress (Ilankoon & Warnakulasooriya, 2014). It may be due to the effects of many stressors along with the transition from school life to university life, including the different mediums of conducting lectures, the unique university culture with discipline, interacting with the unaccustomed clinical environment, and different assessment methods. This stress can lead to a decrease in their academic performance, increase fatigue, and decrease their well-being as well (Bradshaw et al., 2018; Gibbons, 2010; Kernan et al., 2008; McCarthy et al., 2018). Previous researchers have found that excessive stress can affect the academic performance of students (Hughes, 2005; Beddoe et al., 2004) and their psychomotor skills. (Bell, 1991). Thus, the education of student nurses during their undergraduate period may be compromised due to this stressful learning environment. In Sri Lankan universities, it has been noticed that there is clear evidence of poor academic performance and the fail rate is high in first-year nursing undergraduates compared to the other academic years. This is due to the stress they experience at various moments throughout their nursing education, particularly clinical training. Moreover, this severe issue is addressed little in the university, and this can negatively affect student

outcomes and retention (Shields, 2011).

The biggest source of stress for students is a heavy workload. Fazean Idris (2021) highlighted that in terms of mental health, students reported more stress (64.9%), despite having more time for self-study and tighter ties with family. They were also more anxious owing to deadlines, unanticipated interruptions, and larger workloads. Several studies have also demonstrated that the workload must be affordable to the students, and that an excessive workload can lead to stress. A study conducted by Pitkethly and Prosser (2001) also highlighted this heavy workload as a weakness among first-year students. Moreover, Batanneh (2013) reported that the demand of the academic pressure associated with limited social and personal time can lead students to possess a unique type of stressor.

Perception and the response to stress are highly individualized from person to person as well as from time to time in the same person. Therefore, specific and essential strategies should be practiced to cope with those responses to different stressors in order to handle stress or anticipate stress. Coping strategies are the specific tools, both behavioural and psychological mechanisms used to control, reduce or tolerate stressful events. Coping strategies are categorized mainly into two parts: problem-focused coping strategies and emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused strategies are efforts to do something active to alleviate stressful situations, and emotion-focused strategies involve efforts to manage the emotional consequences of stressful events (Shelley Taylor, 1998). In emotion-focused coping, people try to accept sympathy from others, seek social support and deny the existence of stress while in problem-focused coping people take direct actions to solve problems as well as change or modify the source of stress. Researchers have proven that people use both strategies to cope with stressful events (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980).

### **Resilience**

Resilience is described as the process, capacity, or result of effective adaptation in the face of adversity

or threat (Martin et al., 2009). The person can bounce back or recover from a stressful situation (Smith et al., 2008). In the student context, it is the capacity to successfully overcome potential environmental challenges created by early characteristics, situations, and experiences in an academic setting (Martin et al., 2013). This has been examined in numerous studies and several researchers have looked at the link between resilience and academic achievement in nursing students (Beauvais et al., 2014; Montas et al., 2021). For example, Beauvais et al. (2014) found that while there was no link between resilience and academic success in undergraduate nursing students, there was a link between resilience and academic performance in graduate nursing students. Hirano et al. (2010) developed the Bidimensional Resilience Scale (BRS) which was used to clarify which components of resilience are related to academic performance. Furthermore, Beauvais et al. (2014) discovered a link between resilience and academic achievement among undergraduate nursing students in New England. Therefore, students must retain a high level of intrinsic motivation and performance despite the presence of stressful events and situations that lead to poor academic performance and, eventually, dropping out (Martin et al., 2009).

## **Learning**

### **Preferences and Learning styles**

Learning preferences are a complicated notion that describes how students see, process, store, and recall what they are attempting to learn (James & Gardner, 1995). In a learning environment, students differ in many ways because, among other things, they have formed their learning preferences. The first-year nursing student population, in particular, challenges established teaching and learning approaches, such as developing new, culturally sensitive teaching methods (Carty et al., 1998) and their preference for self-directed learning (Walker et al., 2007). Educators and teachers, according to Miller (2001), have a responsibility to understand the diversity of students' learning preferences. Understanding that students have learning preferences might impact how course content is approached. For example, it

motivates teachers to employ a range of teaching techniques, resources, and media to accommodate individual variances (Lujan and DiCarlo, 2006).

Understanding these techniques also makes it easier to engage learners and assist their learning processes (Howard-Jones, 2009). Therefore, this will enhance the university student's academic performance which is effectively quantified using grade point average (GPA), which also analyses their academic goals and educational quality. Moreover, our perception of our ability to influence academic results, also known as perceived academic control (PAC), has an impact on academic achievement. In a Canadian psychology course, students with outstanding academic control had higher three-year GPAs and dropped out of fewer courses (Perry et al., 2005). Therefore, knowing nursing students' learning preferences and how they relate to academic achievement might help inspire curriculum revisions, more appropriate teaching styles, and evaluation methods.

Learning styles pertain to how people like to acquire information and develop conclusions (Savvas, El-Kot, & Sadler-Smith, 2001). Learning styles are one of the crucial elements in academic achievement (Özyurt et al., 2014). It is essential to understand students' learning styles to improve educational efficacy (Mupinga et al., 2006). Nursing educators' failure to pay attention to students' learning styles might result in academic failure. The association between learning style and academic success has been studied in several research. Some of these research findings revealed a strong link between these two factors. For example, Bangcola (2016) revealed that the most common learning style among students was kinesthetic learning style. On the other hand, Alipour et al. (2013) expressed auditory style can also be linked to the teachers' teaching methods. Therefore, instructors should consider the learning styles of nursing students while selecting their teaching approaches to devise effective intervention strategies.

### **English Language Skills**

English language competency has emerged as the key facilitator of globalization and modernization as

society advances in an age where technology governs every area of life (Fischer et al., 2019). There is a rising need for second language acquisition due to increased cultural diversity and frequent interactions between individuals from various cultures. Given that English plays a significant role in empowering people on a global scale, there is an increasing need to increase English language skills, particularly among non-native English speakers (Rameez, 2019). Many non-native English speakers, especially nursing students, are prevented from growing and improving because of their lack of language proficiency, which also causes anxiety, fear, and tension (Khawaja et al., 2017).

In the sphere of education, English is used as a language of instruction by Sri Lankan nursing schools as well as universities. The majority of published academic research and significant references utilized by nursing students and academics in universities around the country are in English. In universities, especially the newly recruited undergraduate students face many challenges due to poor English language skills. At the university, there is new exam patterns like Objective Structured Practical Examinations (OSPE), lectures, Continuous Assessment Tests (CAT) exams, Multiple 8 Choice Questions (MCQs), writing paper, viva, and other practice exams which are conducted in the English language. As a result of these concerns, they are highly stressed, leading them to drop out of the course. Many students would need to devote more time and effort to learning English.

It is said that the language of instruction is critical in aiding course content acquisition and teaching the topic (Ibrahim, Shafaatu, & Yabo, 2017). Previous research has found a strong link between English language competency and academic achievement (Wilson and Komba, 2012; Aina et al., 2013; Kumar, 2014). A study carried out by Neumann (1985) revealed that the English language difficulty faced by students from non-English speaking backgrounds at university is complex and requires significant attention. Moreover, this may be led to a decrease in their academic performance, increase fatigue and decrease their well-being. Furthermore, this severe

issue is addressed a little in the university and this can negatively affect student outcome and retention (Shields, 2011).

According to several studies that have been carried out in the Philippines, it was found that English language ability affects nursing students' academic performance (Oducado & Penuela, 2014; Vidal, Labeeb, Wu, & Alhajraf, 2017). Language barriers affect their learning capacity and, which may have an impact on their academic achievement. According to Abriam-Yago et al. (1999) students with lesser English language acculturation (literacy competence) perform worse in all first-year topics in an undergraduate nursing program. Furthermore, Salamonson et al. (2008) discovered that language challenges affect learning capacity and hence academic performance. Further, it concludes that students with poorer English language competence perform worse in all first-year nursing subjects. In addition, several studies have depicted that nursing students who speak English as a Second Language (ESL) may have more difficulty learning and performing well academically (Glew, Hillege, Salamonson, Dixon, Good, & Lombardo, 2015; Salamonson, Everett, Koch, Andrew, & Davidson, 2008).

Additionally, while English instruction should be offered throughout all academic years, nursing students in many Sri Lankan colleges only receive a few weeks of it during their orientation program. An investigation of nursing education in Taiwan (Ryan et al., 1998) revealed that students' communication, presentation, and research and assignment writing abilities, as well as their level of confidence, were all significantly influenced by their inability to speak or write in English. Because of their poor English communication skills, the study also discovered that these students participated in seminar discussions to a relatively low degree. They were especially hesitant to converse in English in front of native speakers. For many nursing students, being unable to communicate in English became a distressing experience (Ryan et al., 1998).

Therefore, a lack of English proficiency may be a



barrier to students' academic achievement as well as their ability to acquire the nursing knowledge and skills necessary to generate internationally competitive nursing graduates.

### **Teacher-related Factors**

According to multiple prior studies, instructors have the greatest effect on nursing students' academic progress. To increase the growth of students' learning experiences, Ganyaupfu (2013) emphasizes the need for teachers to provide a learner-friendly environment. He also says that lecturers' subject knowledge, class preparation, lesson presentation, and effective communication all contribute to students' academic performance. In addition, Mays (1946) stressed the necessity of having qualified instructors in the area of education, claiming that the capacity of the teacher to educate determines the success of any program. As a result, education implementation, selection, preparation, and monitoring will be impacted. Furthermore, according to Dayad (2000), competent instructors are always on the lookout for methods and instructional resources that will make learning more meaningful. A previous study carried out by Shaheen et al. (2020) stated that the availability of lecturers for educational discussions, educational counselling, and English language and IT (Information Technology) information enhancement support play a significant role in university students.

Richardson et al. (2001) revealed that if a teacher lacks knowledge or is uninterested in teaching, students may not be able to get a thorough understanding of their subject matter. Furthermore, when a lecturer lacks expertise in the course material, students become frustrated, and when their expectations are not met, their academic performance declines (Mbugua et al. 2012). Moreover, Alos et al. (2011) revealed that teaching techniques, student-teacher interactions, and communication difficulties are all challenges to nursing students' academic achievement. As a result, Rane (2010) recommends that teachers should enhance their teaching skills to increase student academic achievement.

Furthermore, Bangbade (2004) discovered that the characteristics of lecturers, such as academic knowledge, communication skills, emotional stability, strong human interactions, and enthusiasm for the job, had a significant influence on students' academic progress. This concludes that a variety of teaching attributes such as subject expertise, effective communication, and lesson preparation have a great impact on the academic performance of nursing students.

### **Institutional Related Factors**

Institutional support assists students with excellent academic achievement and a comfortable lifestyle, particularly in the institutional environment and process (Shaheen et al., 2020). Institutional-related factors have been shown to have a major impact on the academic achievement of student nurses. A supportive team of workers, adequate facilities, affordable charges or course fees, the accessibility and perceived quality of learning resources such as the library, computers, and laboratories, as well as the university's academic regulations, are among these components that help students for good academic and day-to-day life management (Shaheen et al., 2020). Furthermore, various studies have revealed that unqualified and poorly educated instructors, limited facilities, and outdated instructional materials are also among the factors that affect the academic success of students. Many of the other researchers also found that culturally insensitive staff, an unwelcoming environment, and racism in the university were reasons for leaving the university (Walker, Roz, 2000). Bailey et al. (1998) and Prebble et al. (2004) also highlighted that the institutional environment was the third significant factor in retention and satisfaction at the university.

In addition, several previous studies (Prebble et al., 2004; Heverly, 1999) revealed that early and required contact activities with students, enrolment procedures, course scheduling, general administrative procedures, and suitability of timetabling affect the students' satisfaction and persistence in the university and students who complain that information is not readily accessible,

the staff is not supportive, or that policies are not fair are likely to feel alienated from the institution. A similar study by Rikinson and Rutherford (1996) also discovered that useful and better information might have enabled them to enrol in more appropriate courses at the university.

The findings of Listphoria's (2011) study show that physical learning environments, such as insufficient heating and air conditioning, affect students' learning and academic accomplishments, regardless of the teacher's expertise and effectiveness. The findings are in line with the study conducted by Mokgaetsi (2009), which stated that students' attention deteriorates, they feel tired or drowsy, and their cognition, intellectual function, and creativity are all damaged if the environment is excessively hot. Furthermore, the university library should offer comfortable seats, and a broad collection of books, computers, and other learning aids that aid students in succeeding (Jafta, 2013). Therefore, educators and administrators should create an environment that allows students to study more effectively (Tanvi, 2011).

### **Home-related Factors**

Family support is also considered a vital component in students' lives. Since most undergraduates are unemployed, the financial support, love, and care provided by family members is the first and most crucial aspect any student requires (Zavatkay, 2015). Many researchers attempted to find the combination of family and peer support that influenced college outcomes.

Zavatkay (2015) highlighted that since most undergraduates are unemployed, the financial support, love, and care provided by family members is the first and most crucial aspect any student requires. Many researchers attempted to find the combination of family and peer support with college outcomes (Jayarathna, 2015). This finding is in accordance with the findings of some studies, which revealed that social support from family and friends positively correlates with academic engagement (Magolda et al., 1993).

According to research conducted by Bonci (2008), home support is crucial to students' academic performance. Additionally, Evans et al. (2013) and Lourenco et al. (2013) expressed that a lack of parental support leads to a decrease in student academic performance. Moreover, Farooq et al. (2011) stated that family stress, parental educational background, family income, and relationship issues, such as a lack of support and assistance from friends and family members, can have a negative impact on a student's academic performance, causing emotional issues, a lack of attention in class, and a lack of confidence in whatever the student does.

Graetz (1995) performed research on the socioeconomic status of students' parents and found that socioeconomic background had a significant influence on academic achievement. It has been the primary source of educational disparity among students as well as their academic achievement. Considine and Zappala (2002) also agreed with Graetz's viewpoints and they claimed in their study on the impact of social and economic disadvantage on school children's academic performance that parents or guardians who have social, educational, and economic advantage improve the degree of their child's future achievement.

Nnamani et al., (2014) conducted another study on the socioeconomic status of a student's parents, which found that a student's socioeconomic background had a considerable impact on his or her academic potential. They believed that students' academic performance was influenced by social and economic disadvantages. Furthermore, students' socioeconomic issues influence the quality of their mental and physical health, which has an impact on their academic performance. According to Farooq et al. (2011), students with financial challenges, have poor academic performance because they cannot afford to purchase essential resources and their basic needs are not satisfied.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

This review contributes to a better understanding of the factors that affect the academic performance of

nursing students. The findings of the review revealed four related factors that affect the academic performance of nursing students: a) student-related factors, b) teacher-related factors, c) institutional-related factors, and d) home-related factors. The reviewed literature illustrated the background of nursing education in Sri Lanka and provided a comprehensive definition of academic performance within the nursing students' context. The reviewed articles showed the importance of academic progress among nursing students because they have lower self-consciousness and psychological resilience than working people because of their minimal social interactions, making them more sensitive to psychological issues. Therefore, academic achievement has been shown to positively predict life satisfaction among university nursing students (Xiao, Tang, & Shim, 2009). Therefore, there have been several efforts to increase nursing students' academic achievement.

The reviewed articles supported the findings of the student-related factors like adjustability, study habits, motivation, English language skills, stress and coping mechanisms, learning styles, etc., and teacher-related factors like lecturers' subject matter competence, class preparation, lesson presentation, enthusiasm, effective communication, etc., were found to affect the academic achievement of nursing students. In addition, institutional-related factors like a supportive team of workers, adequate facilities, affordable charges or course fees, the accessibility and perceived quality of learning resources such as the library, computers, and laboratories, as well as the university's academic regulations, etc., also affect the academic performance of nursing students. Further, the findings of the review revealed that social support from family and friends positively correlates with the academic engagement of students. Additionally, it clarifies how these variables could affect nursing students' learning strategies and academic results.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The provision of holistic nursing care depends heavily on nursing education, which is influenced by

the content of educational programs, the delivery of teaching, and the expertise of the lecturers (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). Therefore, the goal of this review was to investigate the effects of diverse student concerns on academic performance. This review concluded that external factors such as teacher-related, home-related, and institutional-related factors, as well as internal factors such as personal circumstances, including study habits, impact nursing students' academic performance. Therefore, university administrators and academics have a responsibility to prepare and conduct an intervention program to aid nursing students in improving their academic performance. According to Pinehas et al. (2017), the assessment will encompass students' time management abilities, study skills, stress management skills, nursing field expectations from the student, and the student's family duties. This will assist educators in identifying challenges that students may have that may affect their performance and providing additional support to students so that they may develop good study habits and finish their studies on time.

In addition, mastering the English language is essential for exploring new ideas and receiving internationally standardized healthcare services (Squires & Jacobs, 2016). However, interventions to raise nursing students' level of language proficiency are lacking in Sri Lankan nursing education. Lack of English language ability had a detrimental effect on communication, research, and assignment writing skills. Therefore, improving nursing students' English language proficiency would benefit the nursing profession and healthcare as a whole. It will boost nursing students' psychological health and self-esteem. Moreover, the nursing curriculum in Sri Lanka has to be updated to focus on enhancing IT knowledge and abilities among nursing students. Making IT one of the required core disciplines for nursing students will help achieve this (Huston, 2013). As a result, students will have access to knowledge from around the world, will be able to advance evidence-based practice, and will be able to develop their research skills.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions might help to improve the positive aspects of this review, including that students who are struggling with a lack of interest or time management challenges should receive counseling. For students who are experiencing problems with the English language, special language lessons might be conducted. Further, students should be provided with positive feedback as a reward for better efforts, and teaching techniques should be more participatory and clinically focused. Also, it is recommended that support services provided by universities be updated and improved in light of the current state of the nation, and it is advised to pinpoint the causes of the poor academic performance of nursing undergraduates, implement the necessary remedial measures and direct students in need of extra assistance or the right personnel or services.

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