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## Academic Motivation, Academic Self-Efficacy and Perceived Social Support among Undergraduate Nursing Students, Alexandria University, Egypt.

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### Abstract

Academic motivation and academic self-efficacy are introduced among the main factors that affect students' academic success. Perceived social support concept is another critical factor that can ease adjustment issues faced by nursing students during their learning experience **Aims** Assess the academic motivation, academic self-efficacy and perceived social support among undergraduate nursing students and investigate the relationship between them. **Design** A descriptive correlational design was used in this study **Setting** The study was conducted at the Faculty of Nursing, Alexandria University **Subjects** A representative sample of 400 undergraduate students **Tools** A Socio-demographic and Academic Data Questionnaire, Academic Motivation Scale-College Version (AMS-C 28), Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASE) and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) are standardized tools **Results** It was revealed that 75.0% and 51.2% of students had moderate levels of academic motivation and academic self-efficacy respectively, and 65.0% of them had a high level of perceived social support. A statistically significant positive relationship was found between academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support ( $p < 0.001$ ) **Conclusion** Most of the studied nursing students had moderate levels of academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and a high level of perceived social support. Students' academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support are significantly and positively related to each other. Finally, as time goes on, their academic self-efficacy is significantly decline gradually **Recommendations** Providing continuous adequate and constructive feedback to students about their academic performance is needed in order to motivate them, and future studies are needed to investigate which factors can affect nursing students' academic motivation, academic self-efficacy and perceived social support.

**Keywords:** Academic Motivation, Academic Self-Efficacy, Perceived Social Support & Undergraduate Nursing Students.

### Introduction

The core objective of the current and future academic nursing education is ensuring preparation of professional nurses who are able to meet the health care needs and expectations of all individuals in a dynamic and global society. To achieve this objective, nursing students not only need to acquire the relevant knowledge, skills and competencies, but also need to be satisfied, motivated, feel supported and have faith that they can succeed (Bramley & Matiti, 2014). However, the extent to which a student is satisfied with the academic education depends primarily upon sets of interacting factors. Concepts, such as academic motivation and academic self-efficacy, are introduced among the main factors that affect students' academic success (Bouffard, 2020; Mitchell & McMillan, 2018).

From a psychological perspective, motivation is an important foundation of students' academic development and performance (Husain, 2014). Academic motivation is viewed as the driving force for academic achievement because it enables students to be more energized, self-regulated and increases their learning process capacity. On the other hand,

lacking academic motivation leads to student's underachievement, dropping out and behavioral problems (Taheri-Kharameh, et al., 2018).

The self-determination theory distinguished between two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. The intrinsic motivation (IM) is the motivation that comes from within, where the pleasure or achievement of the task is the real reward. The second type is the extrinsic motivation (EM) which inspired by gaining external and tangible rewards, acquiring status, being favored by others, or avoiding punishment (Manganelli, et al., 2018). It was documented that students with intrinsic motivation develop goals to understand, learn and achieve. More specifically, being intrinsically motivated is essential for nursing students since it helps them to develop greater autonomy and critical thinking qualities in order to find reasonable solutions for different types of clinical problems (Gholami et al., 2016; Orsini, et al., 2015).

Previous studies showed that nursing students with high intrinsic motivation are active participants in their learning activities and more willing to receive considerable amount of information and skills

(Wang, et al., 2019). On the other hand, extrinsically motivated students may study hard to obtain a good grade not to obtain knowledge. Notably, increasing students' extrinsic motivation can help students with low academic performance, to be more interested and satisfied with their learning experience. Despite this fact, one of the serious problems of the academic educational system is the low academic motivation, which leads to considerable educational difficulties (Sanaie, et al., 2019; Tezci, et al., 2015).

It was emphasized that when students lose their academic motivation, they probably find difficulty in dealing with learning problems, their academic self-efficacy is likely to decline (Sanaie et al., 2019). According to (Bandura, et al., 2001), self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Academic self-efficacy is the student's belief that he can reach his planned educational achievements. It also refers to the student's judgment of his capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of academic performance (Sarıkoç & Oksuz, 2017).

Increased self-efficacy greatly influences learning, performance, and motivation by increasing dedication and commitment. Academic self-efficacy functions as the internal motivator for students to endure challenges and achieve goals (Taylor, 2014). Evidence suggests that nursing students with low levels of self-efficacy disbelieve in their educational capabilities and lack clinical motivation and self-esteem. These students would avoid any learning experience because they perceive it may result in failure. They also may not initiate educational tasks to avoid making mistakes (Mills, et al., 2017).

It was proposed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are influenced by social factors. These factors include significant relationships and support perceived by students and provided by their families, teachers, friends, and peers with whom an individual interacts. In this respect, the student's perceived social support is thought to be a crucial promoter of the academic motivation to achieve success (Fung & Webster, 2018). Perceived social support is defined as one's overall impressions on whether social network is adequately supportive or not (Wood, 2016). It refers to how individuals perceive friends, family members and others as sources available to provide material, psychological and overall support and effective help during times of need (Bagci, 2018).

Perceived social support acts like a bumper that provide students with a sense of security and promote their physical and mental wellbeing (Zamani-Alavijeh, et al., 2017). Social support perceived by students from their families, teachers, friends, and

colleagues can lead to the integration of their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Davey, et al., 2014). Other studies have pointed to the effective role of perceived social support on students' positive attitude towards their assignments and sense of belonging to the college. It enables the student to be more motivated to achieve his/her goals, have high self-efficacy, tolerate stress in the university environment, and increase his flexibility (Peña-Sarrionandia, et al., 2015).

Several studies reported that although nursing students start their educational programs with high motivation and self-efficacy, they decline throughout the programs (Chang, et al., 2019; Cook & Artino Jr, 2016; Rosenzweig & Wigfield, 2016). Moreover, it was reported that the student's motivation and their perceived need for support vary during different phases of their education (Wang et al., 2019). Despite these claims, the relationship between academic motivation, self-efficacy and perceived social support is not studied among the Egyptian nursing students.

Accordingly, it is of importance to study how nursing students view their academic motivation and self-efficacy, and how they perceive the support provided by others during their education. Evermore, it very imperative to investigate how these variables are related to each other. By discovering a useful evidence of this relationship, the current study may provide the first realistic step toward exploring and implementing delightful psychiatric nursing interventions to enhance student's academic motivation and academic self-efficacy. Such interventions would improve students' academic performance and hopefully foster the Egyptian nursing education.

#### **Aim Of The Study**

The current study aimed to assess the academic motivation, academic self-efficacy and perceived social support among undergraduate nursing students and investigate the relationship between them.

#### **Research questions:**

- What are the levels of academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support among undergraduate nursing students?
- what is the relationship between these three variables?

#### **Materials & Method**

##### **Materials:**

##### **Research design:**

This study used a descriptive correlational design.

##### **Setting:**

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Nursing, Alexandria University which is affiliated to the Ministry of Higher Education in Egypt. The Faculty has nine different scientific departments, namely,

Medical-Surgical Nursing, Critical Care Nursing, Pediatric Nursing, Obstetric and Gynecological Nursing, Nursing Administration, Community Health Nursing, Gerontological Nursing, Nursing Education and Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing. The Faculty follows the credit hours system in undergraduate (Baccalaureate), and graduate (Diploma, Master, and Doctorate) programs. To obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing sciences, the undergraduate student should study different curricula which are distributed along eight semesters. Each academic year encompasses two terms; the first term covers the first, third, fifth and seventh semesters, and the second term covers the second, fourth, sixth and eighth semesters.

#### **Participants:**

The population for this study comprised of undergraduate nursing students registered at the first term of the academic year 2019-2020. According to the records of the Students' Affairs Department at the Faculty of Nursing, the total number of the students enrolled at the Faculty during this academic year amounted to 2068 undergraduate students. They are distributed along the four academic semesters as follows; 520 in the first semester, 370 in the third semester, 354 in the fifth semester, and 824 students in the seventh semester.

The EPI INFO 7 program was used to estimate the sample size based on using 5% acceptable error, 95% confidence coefficient, 50% expected frequency and population size of 2068 undergraduate students. The program revealed a minimum sample size of 324 students. Accordingly, a stratified random sampling technique was used in this study to recruit a representative sample of 400 students (99 students from the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, 73 students from the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, 63 students from the 5<sup>th</sup> semester and 165 students from the 7<sup>th</sup> semester).

**Tools:** The following four tools were used to collect the data for this study:

#### **Tool I: A Socio-demographic and Academic Data Questionnaire:**

This questionnaire was developed by the researchers to elicit data about the socio-demographic characteristics of the studied subjects such as age, sex, residence, cohabitation, and birth order. In addition, it covers students' academic data such as the current academic semester, previously obtained scientific degree, the reason for joining the Faculty of Nursing and student's last obtained Grade Point Average (GPA).

#### **Tool II: Academic Motivation Scale-College Version (AMS-C 28):**

The AMS-C 28 a standardized scale constructed by (Vallerand et al., 1993) to measure academic intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and

amotivation among college students. The scale has 28 statements each with a 7-point Likert scale; from "does not correspond at all" =1 to "correspond exactly" =7. It includes 7 subscales which are *three intrinsic*-motivation subscales (12 statements: "4 statements each"), three *extrinsic*-motivation subscales (12 statements: "4 statements each"), and one *amotivation* subscale (4 statements). The total score ranges between 28 and 196. In the current study, the total score was calculated by summing up the scores of each subscale and then classified into the followings; scores from 28-70 indicate low academic motivation, scores from 71-133 reflect moderate academic motivation, and scores from 134-196 indicate high academic motivation.

The AMS-C 28 has been used to measure academic motivation among various undergraduate students' population in private and public colleges and universities. Internal consistency reported for the seven subscales was Cronbach's alpha=0.81. Test-retest reliability was estimated for a one-month period for the subscales (mean test-retest correlation=0.79) (Clark, et al., 2014; Dubnjakovic, 2017; Paul, et al., 2015).

#### **Tool III: Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASE):**

The ASE is an eight-item instrument developed by (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001) to assess respondents' self-efficacy regarding several skills related to their academic performance and achievement, such as time management, taking notes, taking tests, and general academic ability. Each item on the ASE was scored along a seven-point Likert scale, where 1=Very Untrue and 7=Very True. The total score ranges from 8 to 56, with higher scores indicate higher academic self-efficacy. In the present study, the total scores were classified into the scores from 8-24 = low academic self-efficacy, scores from 25-41= moderate academic self-efficacy and scores from 42-56= high academic self-efficacy. In previous studies, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the ASE ranged between 0.81 and 0.925 (Almohazie, 2018).

#### **Tool IV: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS):**

This scale was constructed by (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988) to assess the extent to which an individual perceives social support and the degree of satisfaction with this support provided from family, friends, and significant others. The MSPSS consists of 12 items that covers three subscales with each item rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "1"= (Very strongly disagree) to "7"=(Very strongly agree). The three subscales are related to the perceived support from three sources; family, friends, and significant others (4 items each). It worthy to mention that the calculation of the total

mean scores of MSPSS is done through summing up the obtained score of all 12 items then divided by 12. Thus, the total MSPSS scoring ranges from 1-7, scores from 1-3 indicate low level of perceived social support, scores from 4-5 indicates moderate level and scores from 5-7 reflects high level of perceived social support. It was reported that Cronbach's alpha reliability of the MSPSS was 0.89. Alpha scores for the three subscales were 0.93 for friends, 0.92 for family, and 0.93 for significant others (Bruwer, Emsley, Kidd, Lochner, & Seedat, 2008; Davey et al., 2014).

#### Method:

- Official permissions were obtained from the responsible authorities of the Faculty of Nursing, Alexandria University.
- The Socio-demographic and Academic Data Questionnaire (tool I) was developed by the researchers.
- The AMS-C28 (tool II), ASE (tool III) and MSPSS (tool IV) were translated into Arabic language.
- The translated tools were submitted to a jury composed of five experts in the field of Psychiatric Nursing and Mental Health to test their face validity. Tools were proved to be valid.
- A pilot study was carried out on 40 registered undergraduate students to ascertain the clarity and applicability of the study tools and to identify obstacles that might be faced during data collection. The pilot study revealed that study tools were clear, fairly understood, and applicable.
- Cronbach's alpha test was used to measure the internal consistency of the study tools. They proved to be reliable; tool II ( $\alpha=0.850$ ), tool III ( $\alpha=0.897$ ) and tool IV ( $\alpha=0.886$ ).
- The actual study started by approaching the Students' Affairs Department at the Faculty of Nursing and obtaining a list of the registered students' names who are enrolled in the four semesters of the first term in the academic year 2019-2020.
- After excluding students who participated in the pilot study and the reliability test, a representative sample from students registered in the four semesters was recruited through applying the stratified random sampling method using the following steps:
  - a. All registered students in the four semesters (first, third, fifth and seventh semesters) were considered as four strata.
    - b. Using proportional allocation method, a representative sample from students in each stratum (semester) was recruited through the simple randomization technique as follows; 99 students from the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, 73 students from the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, 63 students from the 5<sup>th</sup> semester and 165 students from the 7<sup>th</sup> semester.
      - The researchers collected the data by meeting the randomly recruited students on group basis in their classrooms, and clinical training areas. After explaining the purpose of the study and reassuring the students about anonymity and confidentiality of their responses, an informed written consent was obtained from each student accepted to participate in the study.
      - Tools II, III and IV were distributed to selected students with the necessary instructions regarding answering the study tools.
      - Researchers then attended the students' answering of the study tools to ensure that all information were completed.
      - Data collection was done during the period from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019 to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

#### Ethical considerations:

Throughout the study, the followings were considered:

- An informed written consent was obtained from each student after explaining the purpose and nature of the study.
- Students' privacy and anonymity were considered and respected.
- Confidentiality of data was assured and respected.
- The right to withdraw from the study was declared to all students.

#### Data analysis:

- The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program, version 25.0 was used for data analysis.
- Qualitative data were described using number and percent.
- Quantitative data were described using range (minimum and maximum), mean, and standard deviation.
- Reliability of tools was assessed using Cronbach's alpha test.
- The correlations between two quantitative variables were assessed using Pearson correlation coefficient (r.).
- Multivariate analysis was done using ANOVA.
- The multiple analysis coefficients were assessed by the Stepwise Technique.

## Results

Table (1): Distribution of the studied students according to their socio-demographic and academic characteristics:

Socio-demographic & Academic characteristics	Categories	N= 400	%
Sex	Male	114	28.5
	Female	286	71.5
Age (in years)	<20	120	30.0
	20 –	262	65.5
	25 –	18	4.5
	Min. – Max. (Mean ± SD)	17 – 29 21.01 ±2.05	
Residence	Urban	364	91.0
	Rural	36	9.0
Cohabitation	With family	366	91.5
	In students' houses	9	2.2
	Alone	25	6.3
Semester	1 <sup>st</sup>	99	24.8
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	73	18.3
	5 <sup>th</sup>	63	15.8
	7 <sup>th</sup>	165	41.1
Pre-faculty Education	Secondary school	313	78.2
	Technical Nursing Institute	87	21.8
GPA	A-	16	4.0
	B+	50	12.5
	B	119	29.8
	B-	41	10.3
	C+	57	14.3
	C	89	22.3
	C-	13	3.3
	D	9	2.3
Personal hobbies	Yes	300	62.5
	No	150	37.5
No. of friends	<20	297	74.3
	20 +	103	15.5

Table (2): Distribution of the studied students according to their levels and mean scores of academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support (no=400):

Variables	Min. – Max. (Mean ± SD)	Level	Range	No.	%	Mean ± SD
Academic motivation (Range=7–196)	28 – 172 90.33±19.81	Low (Range=28-70)	28- 70	84	21.0	63.12±12.46
		Moderate (Range=71-133)	71- 125	300	75.0	95.52±11.37
		High (Range=134-196)	126 - 172	16	4.0	135.69±11.06
Academic self-efficacy (Range=8–56)	8 – 49 32.29±9.07	Low (Range=8-24)	7- 21	53	13.3	15.25±4.48
		Moderate (Range=25-41)	22- 36	205	51.2	30.59±3.83

Variables	Min. – Max. (Mean ± SD)	Level	Range	No.	%	Mean ± SD
		High (Range=41-56)	37- 49	142	35.5	41.11±3.52
Perceived social support (Range=1-7)	1.92 –7 5.20±1.30	Low (Range=1-3)	1.92- 2.95	23	5.8	2.09±0.55
		Moderate (Range=4-5)	2.96- 4.98	117	29.2	4.07±0.55
		High (Range=5-7)	4.95- 7	260	65.0	5.98±0.62

Table (3): The correlation matrix between the studied students' academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support (n=400):

Variables		Academic Motivation	Academic Self-Efficacy	Perceived Social Support
Academic Motivation		----	0.515**	0.288**
		----	<0.001	<0.001
Academic Self-Efficacy			----	0.359**
			----	<0.001
Perceived Social Support				----
				----

*r*: the Pearson correlation coefficient \*\* : Statistically significant value at  $p \leq 0.001$

Table (4): The regression analysis coefficient between academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support (N=400):

Dependent Variable	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	R	R Square
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
Academic Motivation	(Constant)	67.432	3.933	----	17.145	.000	.288	8.3%
	Perceived Social Support	4.404	.734	.288	5.998	.000		
Academic Self-Efficacy	(Constant)	19.239	1.755	----	10.960	.000	.359	12.9%
	Perceived Social Support	2.511	.328	.359	7.662	.000		

R2: Coefficient of determination t: t-test of significance \* : Statistically significant value at  $p \leq 0.01$ .

Table (5): The mean scores of academic motivation, self-efficacy, and perceived social support according to each academic semester.

Variable	Categories	No=400	%	Academic Motivation		Academic Self-Efficacy		Perceived Social Support	
				Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Semester	1 <sup>st</sup>	99	24.8	96.73	14.58	34.10	8.53	5.31	1.13
	3 <sup>rd</sup> -	73	18.3	89.68	22.22	32.00	10.05	5.18	1.39
	5 <sup>th</sup>	63	15.8	89.38	19.06	31.79	9.16	5.06	1.37
	7 <sup>th</sup>	165	41.3	87.13	20.93	31.11	8.82	5.19	1.32
F (value)				F (0.470)		F (5.107)**		F (1.876)	

F: ANOVA \* : Statistically significant value at  $p \leq 0.05$  \*\* : Statistically significant value at  $p \leq 0.01$

**Table(1):** illustrates the distribution of the studied students according to their socio-demographic and academic characteristics. The students' age ranges from 17 to 29 years with a mean age of  $21.01 \pm 2.05$  years. Most of them were females (71.5%) and living in urban area (91.0%) with their families (91.5%). The percentages of the studied students who were registered in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, 5<sup>th</sup> semester and 7<sup>th</sup> semester are 24.8%, 18.3%, 15.8% and 41.1%, respectively. Most of the studied students (78.2%) had a general secondary school education pre-joining the faculty. Concerning the student's last obtained Grade Point Average (GPA), the large percent of the studied students (29.8) had B, followed by 22.3 % of them had C and only 4% had A-. Regarding the number of friends, 74.3% of them had number of friends ranging from one to twenty and 62.5% of them had personal hobbies.

**Table(2):** shows distribution of the studied students according to their levels and mean scores of academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support. It can be noted that 75.0% of the studied students had a moderate level of academic motivation and 21.0% of them had a low level of academic motivation, with a total mean score of  $90.33 \pm 19.81$ . Regarding their level of academic self-efficacy, it can be observed that 51.2% of them had a moderate level and 35.5% of them had a high level of academic self-efficacy, with a total mean score of  $32.29 \pm 9.07$ . Concerning the perceived social support level, 65.0% of the studied students had a high level and 29.2% of them had a moderate level of perceived social support, with a total mean score of  $5.20 \pm 1.30$ .

**Table(3):** displays the correlation matrix among the studied nursing students' academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support. Statistically significant positive correlations were found between students' academic motivation and both their academic self-efficacy ( $r=0.515$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and perceived social support ( $r=0.288$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). A statistically significant positive correlation was also noted between academic students' self-efficacy and perceived social support ( $r=0.359$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

**Table(4):** represents the multiple regressions between academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support among the studied undergraduate nursing students. The stepwise technique revealed that the perceived social support was the best predictor of academic motivation and academic self-efficacy. The table reflects that the calculated value of P is statistically significant at (0.01) indicating that the level of perceived social support among undergraduate nursing students predicts their academic motivation and academic self-efficacy by  $R^2= 8.3\%$  and  $12.9\%$  respectively. Thus, the multiple regression equations

that determine the prediction of academic motivation and academic self-efficacy among the studied undergraduate nursing students can be formulated as follows:

**Academic Motivation =  $67.432 + 4.404$  (Perceived Social Support).**

**Academic Self-Efficacy =  $19.239 + 2.511$  (Perceived Social Support).**

This means that an increasing in the level of the perceived social support among the undergraduate nursing students leads to increase in their levels of academic motivation and academic self-efficacy.

**Table(5):** represents the mean scores of academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support according to each academic semester among undergraduate nursing students. It can be noticed that the studied students at the first academic semester had the highest mean scores in both academic motivation and academic self-efficacy ( $96.73 \pm 14.58$  &  $34.10 \pm 8.53$ ) respectively. Meanwhile, the studied students at the seventh semester had the lowest academic motivation and academic self-efficacy mean scores ( $87.13 \pm 20.93$  &  $31.11 \pm 8.82$ ) respectively. The table also reveals that there is a statistically significant differences at level of (0.01) between academic self-efficacy in each academic semester ( $F= 5.107$ ). It can be observed that academic motivation and academic self-efficacy decline gradually from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> semesters. Regarding, the mean scores of perceived social support of the studied students, there is no statistically significant difference between each semester ( $5.31 \pm 1.13$ ,  $5.18 \pm 1.39$ ,  $5.06 \pm 1.37$  &  $5.19 \pm 1.32$ ) respectively.

## Discussion

Academic motivation and academic self-efficacy are vital constructs in the learning process and greatly related to goal establishment and educational achievement in university (Yilmaz, 2017). Likewise, the perceived social support, either from family, friends, or significant others, has the power that allows students to maintain their academic motivation and self-efficacy (Zamani-Alavijeh et al., 2017). Nursing science with it is different specialities needs those students who able to maintain their motivation and have high level of self-efficacy to accomplish their academic success (Bagci, 2018; Mitchell & McMillan, 2018). In this context, the present study aimed to explore the relationship between academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support among undergraduate nursing students. In the present study, the majority of the studied nursing students had a moderate level of academic motivation. This result is in accordance with various studies in the field of nursing education (Khalaila,

2015; Ross, Perkins, & Bodey, 2016). This could be related to the fact that academic motivation is an internal deriving force, and individualized concept, as well it is an outcome of internal and external personal factors. The undergraduate student's beliefs, self-efficacy, value, and interest in nursing education are considered the internal factors. Whereas, academic environment, professional staff and their perceived support from family, colleagues and friends are considered the external factors. Together these factors affect the level of academic motivation in nursing students, which is highly consistent with the findings of the present study. Where the academic motivation, academic self-efficacy and perceived social support are related to each other.

Results showed that most of the studied nursing students had a moderate level of academic self-efficacy. This is in partial agreement with (Sarıkoc & Oksuz, 2017) who found that the academic self-efficacy of the studied nursing students was average. Self-efficacy reflects the student's estimate of his/her capability to perform a specific set of actions required to deal with required tasks. Accordingly, increased self-efficacy needs more self-regulated learning strategies such as planning, monitoring and effort management that need to be acquired by those students.

High level of perceived social support was prevalent among the studied undergraduate nursing students. Although this finding is in contrast with the results of (Zamani-Alavijeh et al., 2017) who reported that most of the students received low levels of the perceived social support. It goes along with (Akouchekian, Roohafza, & Mohammad Sharifi, 2009) who found that perceived social support of the students ranged from moderate to high. This finding in the present study could be related to most of the studied students were living with their family members. As well, most of the studied students having a lot of friends and peers. Indeed, student's perception whether one possesses social support or not, based on his/her past experiences, and if the answer is yes, the interaction with social network increases, and the negative effect of life events decreases.

Results of this study displayed that there is a significant positive relationship between academic motivation and academic self-efficacy among the studied undergraduate nursing students. This result agree with previous studies which reported also a positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic motivation among nursing students (Alemdağ, et al., 2014; Sarıkoc & Oksuz, 2017; Taheri-Kharameh et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2015). This result could be attributed to the fact that the individual is motivated by internal factors such as

curiosity for learning, the pleasure of accomplishing something and his perceived efficacy to complete the task. In the light of Self-Determination Theory of Motivation, the degree of competency that perceived by the student himself is a significant factor influencing his motivational behaviors and inspiring him to do his tasks. If the student perceived himself as competent and self-efficient in performing academic tasks, he will better recognize his potentials and devotes more efforts to achieve his goals and objectives (Wood, 2016). As well, the student will feel more satisfied with his learning experience (Manganelli et al., 2018). Once the student believes in himself and having assignments in his area of control, his intrinsic motivation for academic tasks will increase. Whereas this result is inconsistent with (Ghaleb, Ghait, & Akour, 2015) who reported that, although metacognitive awareness was the most important factor for predicting academic motivation, self-efficacy however academic performance goals were not good predictors of academic motivation.

Multivariate regression analysis showed that the level of perceived social support is important factor in predicting the levels of academic motivation and self-efficacy. This result is in line with other studies which reported that academic motivation and self-efficacy can be increased in numerous ways, including perceived social support from friends and colleagues who can ease adjustment issues faced by students in college or university (Fung & Webster, 2018; Pinar, Yildirim, & Sayin, 2018). This could be explained by the fact that perceived social support has a wide range of functions, including nurturing, empathy, encouragement, information, material assistance, and expression of sharedness. Perception of social support versus its true presence can be protective for those who experiencing different levels of stress like nursing students.

Results revealed that there is a significant difference between the academic self-efficacy of the different semesters. In line with this result, the study of (Conner, 2015) who posted that the high level of academic self-efficacy is reported among the newly nursing students. According to (Bandura, 1993), self-efficacy is energized from accomplishing even small targets, interacting with positive role models, and receiving constructive feedback, and reinforcement. Hence, along the academic years the nursing students need a continuous energetic and enthusiastic role models academic instructors.

### Conclusion

Based on the results of the present study, it can be concluded that most of the studied nursing students had moderate levels of academic motivation,



academic self-efficacy, and high level of perceived social support. Moreover, students' academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support are significantly and positively related to each other. Finally, as time goes on, their academic self-efficacy is significantly decline gradually.

### Recommendations

- Designing nursing curricula which encourage students' autonomy and critical thinking skills that are required for their academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and achievement.
- Providing continuous adequate and constructive feedback to students about their academic performance is needed in order to motivate them.
- Future studies are needed to investigate which factors can affect nursing students' academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and perceived social support.

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