



Behavioural Attitude and Academic Performance of Students in Post-Basic Nursing Schools in FCT, Abuja

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Abstract

In Nigeria, limited studies have shown that the academic performance of post-basic nursing students is influenced by diverse factors, including their behavioral attitudes. Despite the crucial role these students play in the healthcare system, their academic performance is often hampered by negative behavioral attitudes stemming from high-stress levels and inadequate support systems. This study aimed to assess behavioral attitudes and academic performance of post-basic nursing schools in FCT-Abuja. The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive research design. The study population for the survey included post basic students in various post basic schools in FCT-Abuja. The total number of the target population was 211 from all schools and the sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula ($n = 138$). A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the study sample from each school. A self-structured questionnaire was used to obtain data from the respondents after obtaining ethical clearance from the ethical committee of the institution. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26 into descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentage count. Majority of the respondents 59(42.7) were between 18 and 24 years old, 65.9% of the respondents, majority 91(64.1%) were females, most of the respondents practiced Christianity 82(59.4%), while 86(62.3%) are living outside Abuja metropolis. The study findings showed that the prevalent behavioral attitudes among post-basic nursing students are specifically a strong motivation to excel, confidence in academic abilities, active participation in learning, and a focus on academic goals, with an overall mean score of 2.63. There is a high level of impact of behavioural attitudes on academic performance, with an overall mean score of 2.54. The major challenges faced by post-basic nursing students include workload, stress, balancing responsibilities, limited resources, and external pressures, with an overall mean score of 2.82. The findings revealed that students exhibit positive behavioural attitudes including strong motivation, confidence, and commitment to their education, but face challenges such as workload, stress, limited resources, and external pressures which impact their academic performance. The study will help nursing educators and administrators create a supportive learning environment, provide resources, and foster positive behavioral attitudes to enhance academic success and well-being among post basic nursing students.

Keywords: Behavior, Attitudes, Academic, Performance, Post-basic, Nursing, Schools

Introduction

The academic performance of post-basic nursing students is a critical concern in nursing education, as it directly impacts the quality of healthcare delivery and patient outcomes (Jafarian-Amiri et al., 2020). Nursing education plays a pivotal role in shaping competent healthcare professionals, and ensuring that students excel academically is essential for maintaining high standards of patient care. As the demand for highly skilled and proficient nurses continues to rise, understanding the factors that influence academic success in post-basic nursing education becomes imperative. Behavioural attitudes, including psychological and emotional factors such as motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety, are central determinants of academic success. These attitudes do not develop in isolation but are shaped by the learning

environment, institutional support structures, and broader socio-cultural contexts (Hassan et al., 2023). Research has consistently shown that students who possess high levels of intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy tend to engage more effectively with their studies, demonstrating resilience in overcoming academic challenges. Conversely, factors such as stress, anxiety, and a lack of institutional support can significantly impede learning outcomes. Understanding the intricate relationship between these behavioral attitudes and academic performance is crucial for developing targeted interventions that enhance the educational experience and professional readiness of nursing students. In recent years, a growing body of evidence has emphasized the importance of behavioral attitudes in shaping educational outcomes across various disciplines, including nursing education (Asafo-Adjei et al., 2021). Motivation serves as a fundamental driver of academic engagement, influencing the level of effort students exert in their studies. Self-efficacy, on the other hand, reinforces students' confidence in their ability to succeed academically, fostering a proactive approach to learning. However, challenges such as test anxiety, academic stress, and emotional burnout pose significant barriers to student achievement. Several studies conducted across different geographical regions have highlighted the impact of behavioral attitudes on academic performance. For instance, in Ghana, research has demonstrated that post-basic nursing students who exhibit high levels of intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy are more likely to excel academically (Asafo-Adjei et al., 2021). These students actively engage with their coursework, demonstrate perseverance in the face of academic difficulties, and ultimately achieve better academic results. Similarly, in South Africa, studies have shown that nursing students who participate in structured mentorship programs and receive continuous psychological support exhibit improved attitudes towards their studies and enhanced academic performance (Khoza & Chikoko, 2020). This underscores the crucial role that institutional support systems play in shaping students' academic experiences and overall success.

In Nigeria, the academic performance of post-basic nursing students is influenced by a multitude of factors, including their behavioral attitudes, the availability of educational resources, and institutional support structures (Dube & Mlotshwa, 2018). The learning environment in Nigerian nursing schools often presents unique challenges, such as limited access to modern teaching facilities, high levels of academic pressure, and insufficient psychological support systems. Studies indicate that these factors contribute to increased stress levels, decreased motivation, and lower academic performance among nursing students (Asafo-Adjei et al., 2021). Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that incorporates both individual and institutional strategies aimed at fostering positive behavioral attitudes and enhancing academic support systems. Despite the growing recognition of the significance of behavioral attitudes in academic success, there remains a paucity of comprehensive studies focusing specifically on post-basic nursing students in Nigeria. This gap in the literature is particularly noteworthy given the unique socio-economic, cultural, and institutional challenges faced by nursing students in the country (Abdullahi et al., 2022). Most existing studies have primarily examined undergraduate nursing students or general nursing education, overlooking the specific experiences and needs of post-basic nursing students. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between behavioral attitudes and academic performance among post-basic nursing students in Nigeria. By conducting a focused analysis on students in FCT-Abuja, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the factors that influence academic success in nursing education. Furthermore, the study will offer evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, educators, and institutional administrators to enhance the learning environment and support systems for post-basic nursing students in Nigeria. Ensuring that students receive the necessary academic and psychological support is essential for cultivating a competent and resilient nursing workforce, ultimately contributing to improved healthcare outcomes.

Therefore, this study aims to assess the behavioral attitudes and academic performance of post-basic nursing students in FCT-Abuja. By investigating the interplay between motivation, self-efficacy, institutional support, and academic success, this research will contribute to the formulation of effective educational policies and support mechanisms. The findings will not only enhance the academic success of nursing students but also improve the overall quality of nursing education in Nigeria, thereby strengthening the healthcare system and ensuring better patient outcomes. The following research questions were answered by the study:

1. What are the prevalent behavioral attitudes among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja?
2. What is the impact of behavioral attitudes on academic performance among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja?

3. What are the key challenges affecting the academic performance of post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja?

Methodology

This study applied descriptive cross-sectional research study carried out in post basic nursing schools in FCT-Abuja. The following include the post-basic nursing schools captured for this study: FCT School of Nursing, which is geographically located in Gwagwalada, FCT. The school runs a basic and post-basic nursing program which last for three (3) years and 18 months respectively. It currently has about 74 post-basic nursing students enrolled. The School of Post-Basic Critical Care Nursing is located at the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital, Abuja, offering a 12–18-month program for registered nurses who meet the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria's (NMCN) requirements. It currently has about 49 post-basic nursing students. The Post Basic School of Oncology is located at the National Hospital in Abuja, Nigeria; in the heart of Nigeria's capital city. It currently has about 50 enrolled students. Lastly, the Post Basic School of Nephrology located at the National Hospital Abuja offers a comprehensive program in nephrology nursing, accredited by the NMCN. The program covers theoretical and practical aspects of nephrology nursing and is taught by experienced professionals, with a typical duration of 12-18 months. It currently has about 38 enrolled post-basic nursing students. The target population for this study will include all post-basic nursing students across the four post-basic nursing schools captured for this study, with a population of 211 post basic students.

Table 1: List of Post-basic Schools

POST-BASIC SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
School of post-basic critical care nursing, UATH	49	23.2.
FCT College of Nursing Sciences	74	35.
School of post-basic Nephrology Nursing, National Hospital, Abuja.	38	18.0
School of post-basic Oncology Nursing, National Hospital, Abuja.	50	23.7
TOTAL	211	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The total number of the target population was 211 from all schools and the sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula ($n = 138$). A stratified sampling technique was employed in the first stage to divide the population into distinct strata based on individual post-basic nursing schools.

Table 2: Sampling

Schools	No. of Post Basic Students	Sample size
School of post-basic critical care nursing, UATH	49	$49/211 \times 138 = 32$
FCT College of Nursing Sciences	74	$74/211 \times 138 = 48$
School of post-basic Nephrology Nursing, National Hospital, Abuja.	38	$38/211 \times 138 = 25$
School of post-basic Oncology Nursing, National Hospital, Abuja.	50	$50/211 \times 138 = 33$
Total	211	138

Source: Field Survey, 2024

A convenience (accidental) sampling technique was used to select the respondents from all wards in Abuja. This sampling technique was used because the researcher cannot meet the total number of respondents at the same time. A convenient sampling technique uses participants available at a particular time (Shaheen et al., 2023). To test for the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was carried out at Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Kaduna. Ethical approval was obtained from the research committee or school board of all selected schools to obtain ethical approval to allow the researcher to carry out the study. The questionnaire was originally in English language which was given to respondents at the waiting area for completion. Written informed consent was obtained and the study protocol explained. The response from the respondents were scored as follows: 1 = Strongly disagreed, 2 = Disagreed, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree. Ratings of 1 and 2 were considered dissatisfied while ratings of 3 and 5 were considered satisfied. The primary outcome measures were satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Data were entered using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Data were described using frequency distribution and percentage count tables.

Research question 1: What are the prevalent behavioral attitudes among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja?

Table 3: The prevalent behavioral attitudes among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja (n=138)

Statements	SA(%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD(%)	Mean	Decision
I am consistently motivated to excel in my post-basic nursing program, even when the coursework becomes challenging.	77 (55.8)	30 (21.7)	26 (18.8)	5 (3.7)	3.13	Strongly Agree
I feel confident in my ability to succeed academically in the demanding environment of post-basic nursing education.	22 (15.9)	78 (56.5)	27 (19.6)	11 (8.0)	2.57	Agree
I actively participate in nursing school discussions and practical sessions, which enhances my learning experience.	19 (13.7)	57 (41.3)	44 (32)	18 (13.0)	2.51	Agree
I maintain a positive attitude towards my studies at the nursing school, even when balancing clinical rotations and assignments.	22 (15.9)	48 (34.8)	53 (38.4)	15 (10.9)	2.47	Disagree
I believe that perseverance is crucial for overcoming the academic challenges specific to post-basic nursing education.	15 (10.8)	52 (37.7)	26 (18.8)	45 (32.6)	2.13	Disagree
I remain focused on my academic and clinical goals, despite the pressures and demands of nursing school.	74 (53.6)	31 (22.5)	20 (14.5)	13 (9.4)	2.99	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean					2.63	High

Table 3 shows the prevalent behavioral attitudes among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja, answering research question 1. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed that they are consistently motivated to excel in their post-basic nursing program, even when the coursework becomes challenging, as shown by a mean score of 3.13. Furthermore, most of the respondents ($x=2.57$) agreed that they feel confident in their ability to succeed academically

in the demanding environment of post-basic nursing education. The majority of the respondents agreed that they actively participate in nursing school discussions and practical sessions, which enhances their learning experience, represented by a mean score of 2.51. Most of the respondents ($x=2.47$) slightly disagreed that they maintain a positive attitude towards their studies at the nursing school, even when balancing clinical rotations and assignments. Moreover, the majority of the respondents disagreed that perseverance is crucial for overcoming the academic challenges specific to post-basic nursing education, with a mean score of 2.13. Lastly, most of the respondents ($x=2.99$) strongly agreed that they remain focused on their academic and clinical goals, despite the pressures and demands of nursing school. Overall, the prevalent behavioral attitudes among the participants are specifically a strong motivation to excel, confidence in academic abilities, active participation in learning, and a focus on academic goals, with an overall mean score of 2.63, indicating a high level of motivation, confidence, and commitment to their post-basic nursing education.

Research question 2: What is the impact of behavioral attitudes on academic performance among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja?

Table 4 : The impact of behavioral attitudes on academic performance among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja (n=138)

Statements	SA(%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD(%)	Mean	Decision
The level of motivation I bring to my nursing studies directly influences the quality of my academic work and clinical performance.	31 (22.5)	66 (47.8)	29 (21.0)	12 (8.7)	2.68	Strongly Agree
Maintaining a positive attitude significantly improves my academic success in both theoretical and practical aspects of nursing education.	22 (15.9)	49 (56.5)	56 (19.6)	11 (8.0)	1.75	Disagree
My confidence in handling nursing coursework and clinical tasks greatly contributes to my overall academic achievements.	51 (37)	57 (41.3)	18 (13.0)	12 (8.7)	2.88	Strongly Agree
Active participation in nursing school classes and clinical practice sessions positively impacts my grades and learning outcomes.	33 (24)	59 (42.7)	46 (33.3)	0 (0)	2.7	Strongly Agree
A positive mindset helps me manage the stress associated with the rigorous demands of nursing school, leading to better academic results.	23 (16.6)	41 (29.7)	64 (46.3)	10 (7.2)	2.37	Disagree
Seeking academic and clinical support from my instructors when needed has a noticeable effect on my performance in nursing school.	38 (27.5)	51 (37)	18 (13.0)	31 (22.5)	2.6	Agree
My determination to succeed, particularly during challenging times in nursing school, results in improved academic and clinical outcomes	45 (32.6)	59 (42.7)	26 (18.8)	8 (5.7)	2.85	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean					2.54	High

Table 4 shows the impact of behavioral attitudes on academic performance among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja, answering research question 2. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed that their level of motivation directly influences the quality of their academic work and clinical performance, as shown by a mean score of 2.68. Furthermore, most of the respondents ($x=2.88$) strongly agreed that their confidence in handling nursing coursework and clinical tasks greatly contributes to their overall academic achievements. The majority of the respondents also strongly agreed that active participation in nursing school classes and clinical practice sessions positively impacts their grades and learning outcomes, represented by a mean score of 2.7. However, most of the respondents ($x=1.75$) disagreed that maintaining a positive attitude significantly improves their academic success. Moreover, the majority of the respondents agreed that seeking academic and clinical support from their instructors when needed has a noticeable effect on their performance, with a mean score of 2.6. Lastly, most of the respondents ($x=2.85$) strongly agreed that their determination to succeed, particularly during challenging times, results in improved academic and clinical outcomes. Overall, there is a high level of impact of behavioral attitudes on academic performance, with an overall mean score of 2.54.

Research question 3: What are the key challenges affecting the academic performance of post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja?

Table 5: The challenges affecting academic performance among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja (n=138)

Statements	SA(%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD(%)	Mean	Decision
The workload in my post-basic nursing program, including both theoretical and clinical components, is often overwhelming and challenging to manage.	59 (42.7)	72 (52.2)	7 (5.1)	0 (0)	3.3	Strongly Agree
Balancing the demanding requirements of nursing school with personal responsibilities presents a significant challenge to my academic performance.	35 (25.4)	56 (40.6)	29 (21.0)	18 (13.0)	2.73	Agree
A lack of motivation negatively impacts my ability to engage fully with the rigorous academic demands of my nursing program.	28 (20.3)	57 (41.3)	33 (23.9)	20 (14.5)	2.5	Agree
High levels of stress related to clinical rotations, exams, and coursework often hinder my ability to perform well academically in nursing school.	72 (52.2)	45 (32.6)	21 (15.2)	0 (0)	3.2	Strongly Agree
Limited access to essential academic resources and clinical tools within the nursing school environment affects my capacity to succeed.	42 (30.4)	56 (40.6)	36 (26.0)	4 (2.9)	2.92	Agree
External pressures, such as family obligations or part-time work, often interfere with my progress in the post-basic nursing program.	47 (34.0)	50 (36.2)	38 (27.5)	3 (2.1)	2.82	Agree
Inadequate support from nursing school instructors and mentors makes it difficult to achieve the level of academic success I strive for.	15 (10.8)	42 (30.4)	63 (45.7)	18 (13.0)	2.3	Disagree
Overall Mean					2.82	High

Table 5 shows the challenges affecting academic performance among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja answering research 3. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed that high levels of stress related to clinical rotations, exams, and coursework often hinder their ability to perform well academically in nursing school ($x=3.2$), followed by the workload in their post-basic nursing program being often overwhelming and challenging to manage ($x=3.3$). Other challenges include limited access to essential academic resources and clinical tools within the nursing school environment ($x=2.92$), external pressures such as family obligations or part-time work interfering with their progress ($x=2.82$), balancing the demanding requirements of nursing school with personal responsibilities ($x=2.73$), and a lack of motivation negatively impacting their ability to engage fully with academic demands ($x=2.5$). Inadequate support from nursing school instructors and mentors was the least perceived challenge ($x=2.3$), where the majority of the respondents disagreed to it. Overall, the major challenges faced by post-basic nursing students include workload, stress, balancing responsibilities, limited resources, and external pressures, with an overall mean score of 2.82.

Discussion

Majority of the respondents (42.7%) were between 18-24 years old, which is expected since this age range is typical for post-basic nursing students. This age distribution is consistent with study by Gunar (2019), who reported a similar age range among nursing students. A higher proportion of females (65.9%) were represented, consistent with the traditional gender imbalance in the nursing profession, where women dominate the field (Nelson, 2017). Most participants were single, which is expected given the age range of the participants. Christianity was the predominant religion (59.4%), reflecting the religious diversity of the Nigerian population, where Christianity and Islam are the major religions (Nigeria Census Report, 2019). The ethnic distribution showed a varied representation of tribes, highlighting the diversity of the Nigerian population and the need for cultural competence in nursing education to cater to the diverse needs of students (Okafor, 2022; Adejumo, 2018).

The prevalent behavioral attitudes among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja, were identified to include a high level of motivation, confidence, and commitment to their education, with an overall mean score of 2.63. The majority of respondents demonstrated a strong motivation to excel in their program, with a mean score of 3.13. This shows the desire to succeed in their chosen career. This finding is consistent with Wang et al. (2020) who found that motivated students are more likely to achieve academic success. Respondents also showed confidence in their abilities, with a mean score of 2.57. This shows that the students have developed self-efficacy through their experiences and believe in their capacity to handle challenging situations, which is essential for academic success as found by Engar (2017). Active participation in learning was also evident, with a mean score of 2.51. This finding is in line with Chickering and Gamson (2017) who found that student engagement is a key factor in academic success. However, respondents slightly disagreed regarding maintaining a positive attitude when balancing clinical rotations and assignments, with a mean score of 2.47. This finding highlights an area for concern as a positive attitude is essential for coping with the demands of nursing school (Luthans et al., 2021). Overall, the findings suggest that post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja, possess the necessary behavioural attitudes to succeed in their program, but may require support in maintaining a positive attitude during challenging times.

The impact of behavioural attitudes on academic performance among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja, is relatively high, with an overall mean score of 2.54. The majority of respondents strongly agreed that their motivation directly influences the quality of their academic work and clinical performance, with a mean score of 2.68. This finding is consistent with the finding by Zimmerman (2020) that motivation is a key factor in academic success. Respondents also strongly agreed that confidence in handling nursing coursework and clinical tasks greatly contributes to their overall academic achievements, with a mean score of 2.88, in line with the study by Lamar et al. (2019) that self-efficacy is crucial for achieving goals. Active participation in nursing school classes and clinical practice sessions was also seen as positively impacting grades and learning outcomes, with a mean score of 2.7, supporting the finding by Chickering and Gamson (2020) that student engagement is essential for academic success. However, respondents disagreed that maintaining a positive attitude significantly improves academic success, with a mean score of 1.75, contradicting the finding by Luthans et al. (2016) that a positive attitude is essential for coping with academic

demands. Nonetheless, respondents agreed that seeking support from instructors and determination to succeed improves academic and clinical outcomes, with mean scores of 2.6 and 2.85, respectively. This shows that support and determination help overcome obstacles and stay focused on goals as found in the study by Hunsen et al. (2018).

The study found that there exist challenges faced by post-basic nursing students affecting their academic performance. The majority of respondents strongly agreed that high levels of stress related to clinical rotations, exams, and coursework often hinder their ability to perform well academically, with a mean score of 3.2. This finding is consistent with that of Hamaindeh (2018) who found that there is a critical need for stress management interventions, as chronic stress can lead to burnout and decreased academic performance. Majority of the study participants also agreed that the workload in their post-basic nursing program was also a significant challenge, with a mean score of 3.3. This finding indicates that curriculum designers should reconsider the workload and ensure it is manageable for students. Limited access to essential academic resources and clinical tools was another notable challenge, with a mean score of 2.92, consistent with the finding by O'Brien et al. (2015) that access to resources is crucial for academic success. External pressures, such as family obligations or part-time work, and balancing personal responsibilities with demanding academic requirements, were also perceived as significant challenges, with mean scores of 2.82 and 2.73, respectively. This finding emphasizes the importance of support systems. A lack of motivation was also seen as a challenge, with a mean score of 2.5. This finding suggests that motivational strategies are needed to enhance engagement. In contrast, inadequate support from instructors and mentors was the least perceived challenge, with a mean score of 2.3, indicating a positive aspect of the learning environment.

Conclusion

This study investigated behavioral attitudes and academic performance among post-basic nursing students in FCT, Abuja. The findings revealed that students exhibit strong motivation, confidence, and commitment to their education, but face challenges such as workload, stress, limited resources, and external pressures. The study highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between behavioral attitudes, academic performance, and challenges faced by post-basic nursing students. The implications of this study suggest that nursing educators and administrators should prioritize creating a supportive learning environment, providing resources and support, and fostering positive behavioral attitudes to enhance academic success and overall well-being. By addressing these factors, we can empower post-basic nursing students to achieve their full potential and provide high-quality patient care. Overall, the study found that post-basic nursing students possess the necessary behavioral attitudes to succeed, but require support in maintaining a positive attitude during challenging times.

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