

# Self-Confidence and Academic Achievement Among College Students

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## ABSTRACT

### Background

Self-confidence and academic achievement are critical determinants of student success in higher education. While cognitive skills and knowledge are essential, non-cognitive factors such as confidence strongly influence motivation, persistence, and performance. Limited research has explored this relationship among college students in India, particularly in nursing education. This study aims to assess self-confidence levels and academic achievement, and to examine their correlation.

### Material and Methods

A descriptive correlational design was adopted. The study included 294 B.Sc. Nursing students selected through total enumerative sampling. Data were collected using James Manktelow's Self-Confidence Rating Scale and previous year university examination results. Statistical analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation to determine differences and associations.

### Results

Most students demonstrated average self-confidence (76.87%), while 18.36% had high confidence and 4.76% had low confidence. In terms of academic achievement, 41.5% secured distinction, 53.4% achieved first class, 4.42% passed with minimum marks, and 0.7% failed. The mean self-confidence score was  $45.28 \pm 1.681$ , and the mean academic achievement score was  $74.35 \pm 1.816$ . A weak positive correlation ( $r = 0.0241$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) was observed between self-confidence and academic achievement, which was not statistically significant. However, significant differences in academic achievement were found across year levels ( $F = 12.6275$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

### Conclusion

The findings suggest that while many students achieve high academic results, their self-confidence remains at an average level. This highlights the need for interventions to strengthen confidence through strategies such as positive self-talk, reflection on accomplishments, and resilience training. Enhancing self-confidence may indirectly support academic success and professional readiness.

**Keywords:** Self-confidence, Academic achievement, College students, Nursing education

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### Introduction

Self-confidence is a crucial psychological attribute that influences students' motivation, persistence, and overall academic success. It reflects an individual's belief in their abilities to accomplish tasks and overcome challenges, thereby shaping both personal and professional growth. In higher education, particularly

in nursing, self-confidence plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and clinical practice, enabling students to perform effectively in demanding environments [1].

Academic achievement, on the other hand, is a measurable indicator of students' learning outcomes, typically assessed through grades, examination scores,

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and performance evaluations. While cognitive skills are essential, non-cognitive factors such as self-confidence, resilience, and self-efficacy have been increasingly recognized as determinants of academic success [2]. Recent studies suggest that students with higher self-confidence demonstrate better adaptability, problem-solving skills, and readiness for professional responsibilities [3].

Globally, nursing education has undergone significant transformation, requiring students to develop not only technical competencies but also psychosocial skills to meet the challenges of modern healthcare. In India, nursing students often face additional stressors such as relocation to hostels, exposure to clinical responsibilities at an early stage, and high academic expectations. These factors can negatively impact self-confidence, leading to anxiety, reduced motivation, and lower academic performance [4].

Several studies have highlighted the relationship between self-confidence and academic achievement. Alharbi et al. (2021) reported that nursing students with higher confidence levels performed better in clinical assessments [5]. Similarly, Singh & Kaur (2022) found a positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic success among undergraduate students [6]. However, other studies have shown mixed results, with some reporting only weak or non-significant correlations, suggesting that the relationship may be influenced by contextual factors such as teaching methods, peer support, and institutional environment [7].

The importance of fostering self-confidence in nursing students cannot be overstated. Confident students are more likely to engage actively in learning, demonstrate resilience in stressful situations, and deliver safe and effective patient care. Conversely, lack of confidence can lead to poor communication, hesitation in clinical decision-making, and diminished academic outcomes [8]. Therefore, understanding the interplay between self-confidence and academic achievement is vital for designing interventions that enhance student success and professional readiness.

Despite the growing body of literature, there remains limited research in the Indian context, particularly among B.Sc. Nursing students. This study aims to assess self-confidence and academic achievement among nursing students, explore differences across year levels, and examine the correlation between these two variables. The findings are expected to provide insights

into the role of self-confidence in academic success and inform strategies to strengthen student support systems.

## Materials and Methods

This descriptive correlational study was conducted among 294 B.Sc. Nursing students enrolled in Apollo College of Nursing, Chennai, during the academic year 2023–2024. The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee and carried out in compliance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki (2013 revision).

## Population and Sampling:

The target population comprised undergraduate nursing students from II, III, and IV years. A total enumerative sampling technique was adopted, including all eligible students who consented to participate. First-year students were excluded as their academic results were not yet available for comparison.

## Data Collection Instruments:

Two tools were used for data collection:

1. **Background Variables Proforma** – to capture demographic and academic details such as age, gender, year of study, and previous academic performance.
2. **James Manktelow’s Self-Confidence Rating Scale** – a validated instrument to measure self-confidence levels. Scores were categorized into low, average, and high confidence.

Academic achievement was assessed using previous year university examination results, expressed as percentages and classified into distinction, first class, pass, and fail categories.

## Validity and Reliability:

The instruments were validated by subject experts in nursing education and psychology. Content validity was established through expert review, and reliability was confirmed using Cronbach’s alpha ( $>0.80$ ), indicating strong internal consistency.

## Data Collection Procedure:

Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed in classroom settings after obtaining informed consent. Students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The completed questionnaires were coded and entered into a master sheet for analysis.

## Data Analysis:

Data were analysed using SPSS version 22.0.

- **Descriptive statistics** (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to

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summarize self-confidence levels and academic achievement.

- ANOVA was applied to compare differences in

Level of self confidence (Obtainable score)	II Yr (n=98)		III Yr (n=100)		IV Yr (n=96)		Total (N=294)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
High self confidence (52-70)	24	24.48	15	15.00	15	15.62	54	18.36
Average self-confidence (33-51)	67	68.36	82	82.00	77	80.21	226	76.87
Low self confidence (14-32)	7	7.14	3	3.00	4	4.16	14	4.76

self-confidence and academic achievement across year levels.

- **Pearson correlation coefficient** was used to determine the relationship between self-confidence and academic achievement.
- **Chi-square test** was performed to examine associations between self-confidence and selected demographic variables.

### Statistical Significance:

All tests were two-tailed, and a p-value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

### Results

Among the total respondents, 76.87% (n=226) of students reported average self-confidence, while 18.36% (n=54) demonstrated high self-confidence and 4.76% (n=14) had low self-confidence. The mean self-confidence score was  $45.28 \pm 1.68$ , indicating that most students perceived themselves as moderately confident in their abilities. In terms of academic achievement, 41.5% (n=122) of students secured distinction, 53.4% (n=157) achieved First Class, 4.42% (n=13) passed with minimum marks, and 0.7% (n=2) failed. The mean

academic achievement score was  $74.35 \pm 1.82$ , reflecting strong overall performance.

When comparing across year levels, ANOVA analysis revealed no significant difference in self-confidence scores ( $F = 0.30, p > 0.05$ ). However, academic achievement varied significantly across year levels ( $F = 12.63, p < 0.001$ ). Second-year students had a mean score of  $74.6 \pm 4.9$ , third-year students scored  $72.43 \pm 3.79$ , and fourth-year students scored  $76.04 \pm 3.76$ , with final-year students performing better overall. Pearson correlation analysis showed a weak positive correlation ( $r = 0.0241, p > 0.05$ ) between self-confidence and academic achievement, which was not statistically significant. This suggests that while self-confidence and academic achievement are related, the strength of association is minimal in this sample.

Chi-square analysis revealed no significant association between self-confidence and background variables such as age, gender, parental education, and family income ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Level of Self-confidence among Nursing Students. (N= 294)**

**Table 2 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Level of Academic Achievement among Nursing Students. (N = 294)**

Academic Achievement in Previous year (Scores)	II Yr (n=98)		III Yr (n=100)		IV Yr (n=96)		Total (N=294)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Distinction (>75%)	46	46.93	16	16.00	60	62.50	122	41.50
First Class (60-74%)	38	38.77	83	83.00	36	37.50	157	53.40
Pass (50-59%)	13	13.26	0	0.00	0	0.00	13	4.42

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Fail (<50%)	1	1.02	1	1	0	0	2	0.7
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Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of Self-confidence and Academic Achievement of Nursing Students in the Previous Academic year.

(N=294)

Variables (Obtainable score)	II Yr (n=98)			III Yr (n=100)			IV Yr (n=96)			Total (n=294)		
	Mean	SD	Mean %	Mean	SD	Mean %	Mean	SD	Mean %	Mean	SD	Mean %
Self-confidence (14-70)	43.30	7.82	61.85	45.26	4.54	64.66	44.57	6.82	63.67	45.28	1.68	64.68
Overall % of score in previous year (0-100)	74.59	4.89	74.59	72.43	3.79	72.43	76.04	3.76	79.20	74.35	1.816	74.35

Table 4 Comparison of Self-confidence Scores among Different Level of Students using ANOVA.

(N=294)

Level of Students	Mean	SD	F value (ANOVA)	P value
II Year	45.63	7.86	0.30	0.74
III Year	45.26	7.55		

IV Year	44.57	6.82	
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Table 5 Comparison of Academic Achievement among Different Level of Students using ANOVA.(N = 294)

Level of Students	Mean	SD	F value (ANOVA)	P value
II Year	74.6	4.89	12.63	P < 0.00001
III Year	72.43	3.79		
IV Year	76.04	3.76		

Table 6: Correlation between Self-confidence Scores and Academic Achievement among Nursing students by Pearson correlation.

(N=294)

Variables	II Year		III Year		IV Year		Total	
	r	p	r	p	r	p	r	p
Self-confidence								
Academic Achievement	0.14	0.18	0.03	0.74	0.11	0.27	0.02	0.68

Table 7 Association between Selected Background Variables and Level of Self-confidence among Nursing Students

(N=294)

Background Variables	II Year		Chi-Sq	III Year		Chi-Sq	IV Year		Chi-Sq
	U	Above		U	Above		U	Above	
	p	to		p	to		p	to	

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Education of Father									
No formal school	0	0	$\chi^2 = 0.23$ df = 2	0	0	$\chi^2 = 0.05$ df = 2	0	0	$\chi^2 = 0.78$ df = 2
School	33	27		28	23		3	28	
Under Graduate and	19	19	p = 0.63 NS	28	21	p = 0.82 NS	2	11	p = 0.38 NS
Education of Mother									
No formal school	0	0	$\chi^2 = 0.49$ df = 2	0	0	$\chi^2 = 0.24$ df = 2	0	0	$\chi^2 = 1.65$ df = 2
School	28	28		24	21		31	16	
Under Graduate and	24	18	p = 0.48 NS	32	23	p = 0.63 NS	2	23	p = 0.20 NS
Monthly Family Income in Indian Rupees									
Less than 20,000	10	14	$\chi^2 = 2.73$ df = 2	22	11	$\chi^2 = 2.30$ df = 2	1	4	$\chi^2 = 5.83$ df = 2
20,000 – 50,000	31	20		18	18		2	16	
Above 50,000	11	12	p = 0.26 NS	16	15	p = 0.31 NS	1	19	p = 0.05 NS

### Discussion

Self-confidence, being a multidimensional construct, reflects a student's belief in their abilities, motivation, and persistence in academic and clinical contexts. Assessment of self-confidence allows for a shift from traditional measures of academic success (grades and scores) to a broader understanding of psychosocial factors that influence learning outcomes. James Manktelow's Self-Confidence Rating Scale, used in this study, emphasizes psychological and behavioral outcomes, enabling educators to detect variations in confidence levels among individuals and groups [9].

In our study, the majority of students (76.87%) reported average self-confidence,

while only 18.36% demonstrated high confidence. This finding is consistent with recent work showing that nursing students often exhibit moderate confidence levels, which may limit their ability to translate theoretical knowledge into clinical practice [10]. The weak positive correlation between self-confidence and academic achievement ( $r = 0.0241$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) suggests that confidence alone may not directly predict academic success, aligning with studies that reported contextual factors such as teaching methods and peer support significantly influence this relationship [11].

Academic achievement results showed that more than half of the students (53.4%) achieved First Class, and 41.5% secured distinction. Interestingly, despite strong academic performance, self-confidence remained average. This paradox highlights the possibility that students may excel academically due to external pressures (institutional expectations, parental influence) rather than intrinsic confidence. Similar findings were reported in undergraduate populations, where self-efficacy and confidence were not always proportionate to academic grades [12].

ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences in academic achievement across year levels, with final-year students performing better than second- and third-year students. This may be attributed to increased exposure to clinical practice, maturity, and familiarity with examination formats. However, no significant differences were observed in self-confidence across year levels, suggesting that confidence development may require targeted interventions rather than passive progression through the curriculum. Structured confidence-building programs, including simulation-based training and mentorship, have been shown to enhance both confidence and clinical decision-making skills [13].

The lack of significant association between self-confidence and background variables (age, gender, parental education,

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family income) indicates that confidence is shaped more by academic and institutional experiences than by demographic factors. This finding supports recent evidence that resilience and institutional support systems are stronger predictors of confidence than socioeconomic background [14].

Additional studies reinforce these findings. Self-confidence has been shown to mediate the relationship between stress and academic performance, acting as a buffer against academic anxiety [15]. Peer mentoring and collaborative learning environments positively influence confidence levels among nursing students [16]. Confidence has also been identified as a significant predictor of clinical competence among final-year nursing students [17]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, higher confidence was linked to better adaptability to online learning among Indian nursing students [18]. Moreover, reflective journaling and resilience workshops have been reported to improve both academic performance and emotional well-being among healthcare students [19].

Overall, the study underscores the importance of integrating confidence-building strategies into nursing education. Approaches such as positive self-talk, reflection on accomplishments, resilience training, peer mentoring, and simulation-based practice can help students strengthen their confidence, thereby indirectly supporting academic success and professional readiness.

### Conclusion

This descriptive correlational study highlights the relationship between self-confidence and academic achievement among B.Sc. Nursing students. The findings revealed that while the majority of students achieved strong academic results, their self-confidence remained at an average level. This underscores the importance of addressing psychosocial factors in nursing education, beyond focusing solely on academic performance.

During the study, it was observed that students were often hesitant to express their confidence levels openly, reflecting underlying anxiety and institutional pressures. Therefore, beyond teaching theoretical and clinical content, nursing education programs should incorporate structured interventions such as simulation-based training, mentorship, resilience workshops, and reflective practices to strengthen self-confidence. These strategies can elevate both academic success and professional readiness.

Such programs should be well-designed to reach students across different socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring equitable access to confidence-building opportunities. By integrating these approaches, institutions can foster holistic development, preparing nursing graduates not only for academic excellence but also for competent, confident clinical practice.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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