

**Original article:**

**Do the Students have attitude to seek academic help? – A study among undergraduate students**

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**Abstract:**

**Introduction:** Seeking help when needed is an integral part of the learning process. How effectively the students seek help when they experience academic difficulties can influence their success in the University. Academic help-seeking is an useful strategy that promotes effective learning and benefits the students in academic excellence. The present study aimed to assess the attitude on academic help seeking behavior among nursing students. **Methods:** The study was conducted among 96 first year B.Sc. Nursing students of a selected nursing college. The samples were selected by using non probability purposive sampling technique. A self administered three point likert scale on attitude on academic help seeking was used to collect the data. The data was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. **Result:** The item wise responses show that 82% of the students said sometimes they clarify the doubts with the teacher when they don't understand the class, whereas 75% responded that they always ask with their friends. Majority refers in the library (93%) and search in the website (94%). Students responded to some factors which hinders them to seek help. With regard to the approach ability of teachers, 17% always felt that the teachers are neither approachable nor friendly to seek help whereas, 45% felt sometimes felt, in addition to that 25% sometimes felt they don't approach the teachers because they give importance only to the best students. Sixteen percent always felt that they were not given opportunity to express their academic problems. The overall results revealed that majority (59%) of the students had favorable attitude towards academic help seeking whereas 41% had neutral attitude and none of them had unfavorable attitude. It shows that the students have positive attitude to seek help for the academic problems. **Conclusion:** The overall result shows that the students have favorable attitude towards academic help seeking. The factors influencing them not to seek help should be considered and as academician we must provide exemplary academic support for the success of every student. Academic help-seeking is an useful strategy that promotes effective learning and benefits the students in academic excellence.

**Keywords:** Academic; attitude; behavior; help seeking; students

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**Introduction**

Seeking help when needed is an inevitable part of the learning process. How effectively the students seek help when they experience academic difficulties can influence their success in the University. Compared to effective help seekers, students who do not clarify with their teachers are not as likely to experience success<sup>1</sup>.

In a classroom set up, teachers sometimes experience that some students always raise their hands for help whereas, others receive the responses to others questions without asking questions by their own. Some students seek help through online by hitting the “help” button to get the answer but, others seek advice on to solve the problem. These behaviors

denote a lot about students' attitude on learning and seeking help from others for their subject, and their confidence in getting support from teachers and peers<sup>2</sup>.

As far as research in academic contexts is concerned help-seeking has received more attention<sup>3,4</sup>. Research studies proved that women have significantly more positive attitudes than men in seeking help from professional psychologists<sup>5,6</sup>. It has been found that affiliation cues like holding hands can influence people to seek academic help<sup>7</sup>.

Based on the self-regulation framework of learning, people seek help whenever they face any problem which is too difficult for them to solve by their own. Theories of interest and motivation advice

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the teachers about the ways to attract interest in classroom activities. Educators should keep in mind that sometimes attempts to enhance interest can be irrelevant to learning, but promoting interest in an appropriate way can enhance learning; therefore, educators must be clear about understanding the factors that predict and enhance interest<sup>8-10</sup>.

The learning environment plays a major role in improving academic performance. A study conducted to assess the perception on learning environment shows that the undergraduate students had low social perception when compare to other domains of learning environment<sup>11</sup>. Help-seeking is considered as adaptive and instrumental when the help requested is limited to the assistance who needs to solve a problem independently<sup>12</sup>. With regard to the perceived benefits and costs regarding academic help-seeking, students may have different attitudes<sup>13,14</sup>.

Students possess good physical and psychological health may seek academic help for better learning and academic achievement. A study revealed that there is a correlation between the lifestyle, psychological health and the academic achievements of the students<sup>15</sup>.

Academic help-seeking is an useful strategy that promotes effective learning and benefits the students in academic excellence. Hence the investigator would like to find out the attitude of students towards academic help seeking behavior by which the investigator can plan remedial measures in future to overcome the barriers for the students to seek academic help.

The present study aimed to assess the Nursing students attitude on academic help seeking in selected Nursing Colleges at Mangalore. The study objectives were, to assess the attitude on academic help seeking among nursing students and to find the association between the attitude and selected demographic variables.

### Methodology

The research design chosen for the present study is descriptive in nature. The study was conducted among the first year B.Sc. Nursing students of a selected Nursing college. Ninety six students from a single class were selected for the study by non probability purposive sampling technique. Approval from the Research centre, Institution Ethics Committee and data collection setting were obtained. Informed consent for the voluntary participation was obtained from the study samples prior to the data collection. The study instrument used to gather the data was divided into two parts as section A and B. Section-A: Baseline Data which includes age, gender, class, area

of residence and current living status. Section-B: Attitude Scale on academic help seeking behavior. It is a 3 point Likert scale consists of 18 items scoring from 0-2 (Always - 2 ; Sometimes - 1; Never- 0; Q. No. 6-18 reverse scoring) with a total score of 36. The Score is interpreted as favorable attitude: 25-36, Neutral: 13-24 and unfavorable attitude: 1-12. The tool was validated by the expert in the field of education and nursing and it was pretested. The Self administered attitude scale was distributed to the study samples who were willing to participate in the study. The collected data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and the inferential statistics.

**Ethical clearance:** Obtained from Yenepoya university Ethics Committee

### Results/ Discussions

The baseline data of the students (Table.1) shows that all the students fall in the category of 18-20 years and majority (97%) were female participants. With regard to their type of family majority (95%) of the students belong to nuclear family.

**Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of baseline data of the students N = 96**

Baseline data	Frequency	percentage
<b>Age in Years</b>		
a. 18-20	96	100%
b. 21-25	-	-
c. 26-30	-	-
d. Above 30	-	-
<b>Gender</b>		
a. Male	3	3%
b. Female	93	97%
<b>Type of Family</b>		
a. Nuclear	91	95%
b. Joint	5	5%
<b>Area of Residence</b>		
a. Urban	82	85%
b. Rural	14	15%
<b>Current place of living</b>		
a. Hostel	96	100%
b. Paying Guest	-	-
c. Home	-	-

Most (85%) of the students are from urban community and the rest (15%) are from rural area and all the students were staying in hostel. The results revealed that majority (59%) of the students had favourable attitude towards academic help seeking whereas 41% had neutral attitude and none of them had unfavourable attitude (Fig.1).

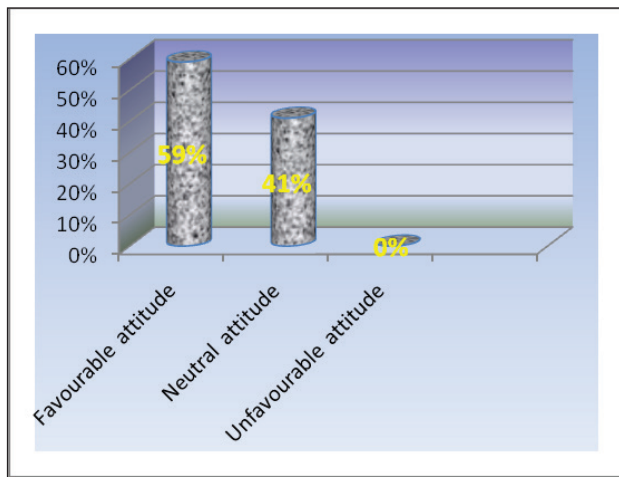


Figure 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of students attitude on academic help seeking

It shows that the students have positive attitude to seek help for the academic problems. The item wise responses show (Table.2) that 82% of the students said sometimes they clarify the doubts with the teacher when they don't understand the class, whereas 75% responded that they always ask with their friends. A study conducted to assess the Students' academic help seeking from peers revealed that when the children become older, they are less likely to ask help with their classmates to understand certain concepts, but far more likely to get "expedient" help - like copying homework. Expedient help is not cheating, but are like, they just want to finish their homework<sup>16</sup>.

**Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of responses of students to attitude scale N = 96**

Attitude on Academic help Seeking	Always	Sometimes	Never
If I don't understand the class, I clarify with my teacher	11 (12%)	79 (82%)	6 (6%)
I like to ask my friends if I couldn't follow the class	72 (75%)	22 (23%)	2 (2%)
If I have doubt I'll refer in the library	33(35%)	56 (58%)	7 (7%)
I can understand well if I search the information online	23 (24%)	67 (70%)	6 (6%)
I will meet the teacher after the class and ask for clarification of subject material	8 (8%)	39 (41%)	49 (51%)
I feel my teacher will mistake me if I ask doubt	12 (13%)	30 (31%)	54 (56%)
I feel my classmate will tease me if I ask doubt	7 (7%)	23 (24%)	66 (69%)
I don't want to express to others that I couldn't understand the class	4 (4%)	74 (77%)	18 (19%)
I will not ask anyone even though I have doubt	7 (7%)	46 (48%)	43 (45%)

Attitude on Academic help Seeking	Always	Sometimes	Never
I feel shy to seek academic help from others	5 (5%)	42 (44%)	49 (51%)
I am confident I can understand the class better and doesn't require help from others	5 (5%)	28 (29%)	63 (66%)
I don't have time to approach the teacher	6 (6%)	29 (30%)	6 (64%)
I don't seek help as I feel that teachers are neither approachable nor friendly to seek help	17 (17%)	43 (45%)	36 (38%)
I don't approach teachers, because they give importance only to the best students.	3 (3%)	24 (25%)	69 (72%)
I don't ask help as I feel that students have no opportunity to express their academic problems	6 (6%)	22 (23%)	68 (71%)
I don't like to seek help as I am forced to take up this course	4 (4%)	24 (25%)	68 (71%)
My ailing health problem doesn't not allow me to seek help	5 (5%)	31 (32%)	60 (63%)
I don't require help as I feel good about myself	9 (10%)	31 (32%)	56 (58%)

Majority refers in the library (93%) and search in the online(94%). A study tracked when high school students with high and low math skills asked for help on a computer-based geometry-tutoring program. As expected, the students who overused the help by clicking the answer, learned less and students who asked for help priorly on the challenging questions learned more. Students with little knowledge of a particular question learned more when they avoided help and instead tried and failed repeatedly. They also suggested that low-skilled students may not have enough prior knowledge to understand high-level help given<sup>17</sup>.

Eight percent of the students responded that they always approach the teacher for clarification and 41% sometimes meet the teacher and majority (51%) said they never met the teacher to clarify the subject matter. Some of the factors related to not seeking help are discussed here. Five percent felt they always feel shy, 44 % sometimes feel shy and 51% percent said that they never feel shy to ask academic help whereas 45% they never seek help from others even though they have doubt. Majority of them never felt that their teacher (56%) will mistake and classmate (69%) will tease if they ask doubts but, some always (13%, 7%) and sometimes (31%, 24%) felt that their teachers and classmates will mistake, so they don't ask help. They also felt that they don't require help as they are sometimes confident (29%) in understanding the class and felt good about themselves (32%).

With regard to the approach ability of teachers, 17% always felt that the teachers are neither approachable nor friendly to seek help 45% sometimes felt, in addition to that 25% sometimes felt they don't approach the teachers because they give importance only to the best students. Six percent of the students expressed that always students were not given opportunity to express their academic problems and 23% said sometimes the opportunity was not given. A study done by Gwen Marchand and Ellen A. Skinner, Portland State University among 765 school children investigated whether motivational resources predicted help-seeking. The results show that the students who were motivated well were seeking good help, whereas who have not motivated concealed their difficulties and failed to seek help. Hence it is important that the teacher must be approachable, friendly and motivate the students to achieve higher academic performance<sup>18</sup>.

It was also found in the chi-square test that there was no significant association between the baseline data and the attitude on academic help seeking. The limitations of the study are, the tool was developed by the Investigator and the generalization of the result is not possible as sample size is limited to one college. The study can be replicated as qualitative study and also can be expanded to assess the barriers for academic help seeking among students.

### **Implications**

Identifying academic help seeking behavior is

beneficial for the students not only to improve their grade or scores, but also to inculcate the academic mindset among them. Academic organizations can conduct induction programs on academic advices to improve the academic help seeking behaviors of students. The faculty, Program advisors or the academic counselor or mentor must regularly interact with the students to find out the barriers to seek academic help and plan certain strategies to overcome the barriers.

### **Conclusion**

The overall result shows that the students have favourable attitude towards academic help seeking. The factors influencing them not to seek help should be considered and as academician we must identify the students who need help and provide exemplary academic support for the success of every student. Academic help-seeking is a useful strategy that promotes effective learning and benefits the students in academic excellence.

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**Authors's contribution:**

**Data gathering and idea owner of this study:**

Umarani J

**Study design:** Umarani J

**Data gathering:** Umarani J

**Writing and submitting manuscript:** Umarani J

**Editing and approval of final draft:** Umarani J

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