

# Undergraduate Nursing Student's Perception and the Factors Influencing on Assignment Practice

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**Abstract Aim:** This research attempted to examine the effect of selected factors on students' response on assignment practices among undergraduate students in the college of Nursing in Hail University (KSA). **Methods:** The descriptive design included a sample of 170 Saudi nursing students, 120 of them were undergraduate students as well as the 50 internship students at College of Nursing, University of Hail, Kingdom of Saudi .The Assignment survey questionnaire was used to determine students view and the factors that influence students' assignment practice. **Results:** Results reveal that there was a significant difference in the extent of effect of gender, marital status, parents' education, occupation of father and living with, on the mean time spent in doing assignments of nurse college students. **Conclusion:** These results imply that nursing students perceived the role of assignments in their courses and aware of its importance to improve their academic level in the course. Students should be allowed to express their views of assignment practices that they deal with every day.

**Keywords:** nursing student, perception, factors, assignment practices

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## 1. Introduction

Assignment work is one of the most important practices for establishing a successful academic environment. Assignment is a vital part of learning and it is expected by teachers and students. Assignment plays a very good role in student's life .The most common purpose of assignment is to have students practice material already presented in class so as to reinforce learning and facilitate mastery of specific skills. Every teacher assigns homework to students. Teachers, parents as well as students believe that this activity is needed, which should be done in non-college hours. Assignments often cause frustration for students [1]. Assignment has always been a source of controversy among students, parents, and educators. Assignment issues center around quantity, quality, and time restrictions on out-of-class activities [2].

Assignment practice is based on the student's self-regulatory processes and beliefs. Self-regulation of learning involves personal initiative and available support system [3]. High achieving students have higher self – efficacy beliefs about their capability to learn on their own by doing assignments and are more responsible for their academic success [4]. Many recent studies on assignment practices focused on method teacher's use for grading as part of the student's academic performances. According to Pelletier, R, & Normore A. H5- 2007, most decisions about assignment

are still made on a teacher- by-teacher basis and teacher behaviors contribute to a positive approach towards assignments by the student. Obstacles may lead to frustration. Homework assignments beyond students' ability may have negative impacts on students' attitude toward and on their perceptions about homework, which in turn disappoints. Correcting mistakes and providing feedback/correction for students is considered to be beneficial and essential monitoring of assignments (whether and how well they have been done) may contribute positively to students 'achievement. Students and parents complain about assignment load. Parents claim that it may paralyze their social life [6]. When assigned too many assignments, students attempt to get rid of it and display avoidance behavior, which requires that teachers should be aware of the effects of too much assignment. Therefore, teachers should monitor students' individual readiness to do assignments [7].

The process of doing assignment requires careful examination. Whether students have enough resources and whether they can do it by themselves may affect the effectiveness of assignment [7] (Pelletier, R., & Normore, A. H. (2007). Some assignments force parents or care takers to help the student with the assignment or guide them. Moreover, many student as well as parents take seriously and do their best to support them [8]. However, not all parents know how to help their children with assignments [9].

In summary, although teachers continue to give assignments, when some students fail to turn it in, there are

justifiable reasons why they continue to require the completion of such tasks.

The purpose of this paper is to identify factors that influence on assignment practices. The study aims to figure out how to increase effective assignment completion.

### 1.1. Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to determine the factors that affect the assignment practice of undergraduate nurse college students at the University of Hail, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. Determine the main factors (socio-demographic) that may influence students' assignment practice.
2. Determine the extent of the related factors on students' assignment practice.

### 1.3. Operational Definitions of Keywords

A) **Perception**: It refers to the way in which students view about assignment practices. B) **Assignment practices**: It refers to a task or piece of work that is given by teachers to students that to be fulfilled outside of college hours as part of course of study. C) **Influencing factors**: It refers to the task that change or intervene in an indirect way for the undergraduate nursing students to their views on assignment practices, which is measured by assignment survey questionnaire includes time spent on assignment, Purpose of assignment, Difficulty of assignment, Support system, Getting it done and Staying organized.

### 1.4. Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in students' perception for assignment practice due to the proposed factors. The hypothesis is expected to be rejected.

## 2. Subjects and Methods

### 2.1 Research Design

A descriptive research design is used.

### 2.2. Sampling

The target population consisted of all nursing students who satisfied the inclusion criteria, namely: (1) a nursing students (Level 2-8), in an RN-BSN program; (2) a nursing students (internship Level), in an RN-BSN program(3) conversant in English (able to read and write English); and (4) voluntarily participate in the study. Utilizing the statistical software G-Power version 3.1.3 with the following input parameters (one tailed independent sample t-test, alpha error probability = 0.05, power = 0.80 and effect size of 0.5), the estimated sample size needed was 170. 120 undergraduate students as well the 50 internship undergraduate in the University of Hail,

Saudi Arabia. All students who were given a piece of work as assignment, related to theory and practical session as part of their curriculum was included.

### 2.3. Data Collection

**Tool**: A self-administrative questionnaire was distributed among students, which includes:

**Section A**: socio –demographic data included Age, Gender, Marital status, Parents' education level, Occupation of father, Student level, Number of credit registered, Living with whom. Accessibility to a computer, Accessibility to internet, Grades in this course.

**Section B**: Assignment survey Questionnaire with 30 items pertaining to assignment practice which includes the factors such as Time spent on assignment, Purpose of assignment, Difficulty of assignment, Support system, Getting it done and Staying organized was used. Each factor has subset indicators which were given corresponding rating by the respondents using a Scale of 2 composed of 1 (agree), 2 (disagree). Using Cronbach Alpha, the said instrument was found to be reliable as indicated by the value of 0.790. All the students were asked to rate their answers. Each student was asked to complete a questionnaire. The researcher was present and provided clarification to the students when necessary. It took 15 minutes and was constructed to give students limited alternative responses to each question.

### 2.4 Ethical Consideration

The study was carried out with the approval of the ethical committee of University of Hail. Permission was taken from the Dean of the College of Nursing to carry out the study. Informed consent was received from each participant prior to distribution of the questionnaire. Participants were assured that their responses would be confidential and anonymous, and that rejection to participate would in no way risk their studying.

## 3. Results

**Table 1** shows the demographic profile of the respondents, most of respondent ages are in the range (20-25) of about 67.6% also there were more female (59.4%) than male (40.6%) respondents. The highest marital status was the single with a percent of 67.6%, regarding parents education it is shown in **Table 1** that the highest percentage are for primary and pre University level which is about 23% of all other levels. Majority of the respondent's father were unemployed with a percentage of 32.4%. Most of the students were in level VII and registering more than 10 credit hours per semester with 42.4%, 79.4% respectively. As the majority of respondents were single we expected that most of them live with their parents, which is the case here, hence about 36.5% of students live with their parents. The respondent accesses to internet and computer was so positive, 86.5% and 82.9% respectively. A greater part of the respondents have moderate grades in the course of this study so about 34.7% took between C and C+.

Regarding the influencing factors, a scale of 4 was given to the first factor "Time spent on assignment", students' response was 2.82 out of 4 on the frequency of having assignments in the course which indicates high response of students, while the grant mean for this factor was 2.77 out of 4. On the other hand 70% of students said that the given assignments were too long.

T- Test and ANOVA Test were used to determine if there is a significance difference in the means perception of assignments due to socio-demographic factors. A significance level of 0.05 was considered.

**Table 2:** Summarizes the results we obtain regarding the effect of Gender on related factors. The p-values reveal that there was a significant difference in the extent of effect of gender on "Time spend on assignment", "Difficulty of assignment ", and "Getting it done".

**Table 3:** Shows the results obtained regarding the effect of Marital Status on related factors. The p-values reveal that there was a significant difference in the extent of effect of marital status revealed to "No difficulty of concentration" the study shows that being single is better

to concentrate in assignments than being married or divorced, which is an expected result.

**Table 4:** Summarizes the results regarding the effect of Parents' Education Status on related factors. The obtained p-values reveal that there was a significant difference in the extent of effect parents' education with respect to "Time spent on assignment", "Support System", and "Staying Organized". Parents' education level plays an important role on students care and knowledge of doing assignments and follow up with their courses.

Similar tables can be done regarding other demographic factors, so the occupation of father and living with, have a significance difference. It can be realized from **Table 5** that these factors influence the response of nursing college students on assignment practice. From statistical analysis we obtain that the main result is: "There is a significance difference in the response means of related factors due to gender, marital status, Education of parents, Occupation of father and Living with level factors, while other socio-demographic factors have no significance difference in respondent means.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile Statistics**

Profile		n	%
Age	(20-25)	115	67.6
	(26-30)	29	17.1
	(31-35)	18	10.6
	36 and above	8	4.7
Gender	Male	69	40.6
	Female	101	59.4
Marital status	Married	52	30.6
	Single	115	67.6
	Widow	2	1.2
	separated	1	.6
Parents Education	Illiterate	30	17.6
	Primary	40	23.5
	Secondary	24	14.1
	Pre-University	39	22.9
	Graduate/Diploma	25	14.7
	Post-Graduate	12	7.1
Father Occupation	Unemployed	55	32.4
	Technical	33	19.4
	semi-skilled	37	21.8
	self-employed	45	26.5
College Level	Level V	9	5.3
	Level VI	27	15.9
	Level VII	72	42.4
	Level VIII	62	36.5
Credit Hours	less than 10 hours	35	20.6
	more than 10 hours	135	79.4
Living With	with spouse	40	23.5
	with children	57	33.5
	with parents	62	36.5
	with relatives	11	6.5
Accesses to Computer	yes	141	82.9
	no	29	17.1
Accesses to internet	yes	147	86.5
	no	23	13.5
Grades in the course	A and A+	42	24.7
	B and B+	53	31.2
	C and C+	59	34.7
	D and D+	16	9.4

Table 2. Significance difference using T-test in related factors due to Gender

Related factors		t-value	p-value	Remarks	Decision
<b>Time spent on assignment</b>					
1	Frequency of having assignments in the course	-3.7	0.000	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
2	Time spent on assignment during one semester	1.06	0.291	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Are the assignments too long	0.441	0.66	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Purpose of Assignment</b>					
1	Assignments are based on information learned in a previous semester.	0.193	0.847	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Assignments are based on information learned in a present semester.	0.909	0.364	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Assignments is necessary to pass this semester	0.425	0.671	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Assignment is part of the course grade	0.142	0.887	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Assignment helps to understand the material studied in this course	-1.196	0.233	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Difficulty of assignment</b>					
1	Understand the reason for doing the assignments	-1.66	0.098	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Most of time the assignment is easy	-3.98	0.000	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
3	Hard assignment does not makes frustration	-4.4	0.000	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
4	Sufficient time is given to complete assignment	-2.5	0.012	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
5	Few academic obligations to complete the assignment.	-3.25	0.001	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Support System</b>					
1	Instructor helps to understand the assignment	-1.7	0.092	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Late submission of assignment is not accepted for full credit	-1.6	0.112	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Instructor recognizes my work on assignment	-3.11	0.002	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
4	Spouse/Parents render necessary help to do assignment	-2.7	0.007	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
5	Instructor checks assignments one submitted	-1.95	0.052	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Getting it Done</b>					
1	Have a quiet place to do assignment	-0.152	0.879	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Few distractions at home	-3.42	0.001	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
3	No difficulty of concentration	-4.7	0.000	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
4	Less tired to do assignment	-7.6	0.448	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Activities at home enhance completion of assignments	-2.1	0.037	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
6	Interests in the course of study inferences in doing the assignment	-3.23	0.001	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
7	Assignment in other classes does not affect the priority over this semester's assignments.	-1.67	0.095	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Staying Organized</b>					
1	Aware about the assignment.	-0.1	0.92	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Forgets to do assignments	1.09	0.27	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Give everything needed for the assignment	0.122	0.90	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Forgets something needed to do the assignment like books etc.	0.476	0.634	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Did assignment but could not find it.	2.39	0.018	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>

Table 3. Significance difference using ANOVA test in related factors due to Marital Status

Related factors		F-value	p-value	Remarks	Decision
<b>Time spent on assignment</b>					
1	Frequency of having assignments in the course	1.722	.165	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Time spent on assignment during one semester	.791	.500	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Are the assignments too long	.934	.426	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Purpose of Assignment</b>					
1	Assignments are based on information learned in a previous semester.	.865	.460	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Assignments are based on information learned in a present semester.	.137	.938	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Assignments is necessary to pass this semester	.266	.850	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Assignment is part of the course grade	.465	.707	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Assignment helps to understand the material studied in this course	.341	.796	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Difficulty of assignment</b>					
1	Understand the reason for doing the assignments	1.076	.361	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Most of time the assignment is easy	1.078	.360	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Hard assignment does not makes frustration	1.484	.221	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Sufficient time is given to complete the assignment	.432	.731	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Few academic obligations to complete the assignment.	.401	.752	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Support System</b>					
1	Instructor helps to understand the assignment	.324	.808	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Late submission of assignment is not accepted for full credit	.287	.835	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Instructor recognizes my work on assignment	.269	.847	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Spouse/Parents render necessary help to do assignment	.509	.677	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Instructor checks assignments one submitted	1.099	.351	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Getting it Done</b>					
1	Have a quiet place to do assignment	.523	.667	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Few distractions at home	1.295	.278	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	No difficulty of concentration	2.711	.047	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
4	Less tired to do assignment	1.970	.120	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Activities at home enhance completion of assignments	.701	.552	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
6	Interests in the course of study inferences in doing the assignment	1.275	.285	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
7	Assignment in other classes does not affect the priority over this semester's assignments.	1.238	.298	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Staying Organized</b>					
1	Aware about the assignment.	.780	.506	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Forgets to do assignments	.063	.979	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Give everything needed for the assignment	.723	.540	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Forgets something needed to do the assignment like books etc.	1.340	.263	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Did assignment but could not find it.	1.385	.249	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

**Table 4. Significance difference using ANOVA test in related factors due to parents' education status**

Related factors		F-value	p-value	Remarks	Decision
<b>Time spent on assignment</b>					
1	Frequency of having assignments in the course	2.468	.035	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
2	Time spent on assignment during one semester	3.038	.012	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
3	Are the assignments too long	.914	.474	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Purpose of Assignment</b>					
1	Assignments are based on information learned in a previous semester.	2.407	.039	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
2	Assignments are based on information learned in a present semester.	.350	.882	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Assignments is necessary to pass this semester	.307	.908	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Assignment is part of the course grade	1.004	.417	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Assignment helps to understand the material studied in this course	.746	.590	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Difficulty of assignment</b>					
1	Understand the reason for doing the assignments	1.173	.325	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Most of time the assignment is easy	.733	.600	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Hard assignment does not makes frustration	2.852	.017	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
4	Sufficient time is given to complete the assignment	1.476	.200	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Few academic obligations to complete the assignment.	.977	.434	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Support System</b>					
1	Instructor helps to understand the assignment	2.236	.053	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Late submission of assignment is not accepted for full credit	.296	.914	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Instructor recognizes my work on assignment	1.719	.133	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Spouse/Parents render necessary help to do assignment	1.098	.364	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Instructor checks assignments one submitted	2.477	.034	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Getting it Done</b>					
1	Have a quiet place to do assignment	.313	.905	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Few distractions at home	1.696	.138	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	No difficulty of concentration	1.387	.232	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Less tired to do assignment	1.313	.261	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
5	Activities at home enhance completion of assignments	.166	.975	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
6	Interests in the course of study inferences in doing the assignment	.697	.626	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
7	Assignment in other classes does not affect the priority over this semester's assignments.	.495	.780	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
<b>Staying Organized</b>					
1	Aware about the assignment.	1.812	.113	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
2	Forgets to do assignments	.226	.951	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
3	Give everything needed for the assignment	1.910	.095	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
4	Forgets something needed to do the assignment like books etc.	3.600	.004	Significance	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
5	Did assignment but could not find it.	.982	.430	Not Significance	Accept H <sub>0</sub>

**Table 5. Significant Difference In The Extent Of Profile Factors Has On Time Spent On Assignment**

Profile	Mean response	p-value	Remarks	Decision
Age	20-25	0.11	Not Sig*	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
	26-30			
	31-35			
	36 and above			
Gender	Male	0.03	Sig*	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
	Female			
Marital Status	Married	0.04	Sig*	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
	Single			
	Widow			
	Separated			
Education Status of Parents	Illiterate	0.02	Sig*	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
	Primary			
	Secondary			
	Pre-University			
	Graduate/Diploma			
	Post-Graduate			
Occupation of Father	Unemployed	0.00	Sig*	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
	Technical			
	Semi-skilled			
	Self-employed			
Student's Level	Level V	0.52	Not Sig*	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
	Level VI			
	Level VII			
	Level VIII			
Credit Hours	less than 10 hours	0.19	Not Sig*	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
	more than 10 hours			
Living With	with spouse	0.01	Sig*	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
	with children			
	with parents			
	with relatives			
Accesses to Computer	yes	0.09	Not Sig*	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
	no			
Accesses to internet	yes	0.40	Not Sig*	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
	no			
Grades in the course	A and A+	0.49	Not Sig*	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
	B and B+			
	C and C+			
	D and D+			

\* Sig = Significance

## 4. Discussion

From the above statistical analysis and hypothesis tests it is found that students response are Age, with highest mean for the interval 31-36years old. Gender, it was noticeable that female students spend more time on doing assignments and are highly positive regarding the importance and difficulty of assignments. This study also reveal that more than 10 hours of assignment in a semester, still showed no increase in academic achievement. Most of the students took moderate grade. These findings are contradictive to the most recent studies [5,6,7,30] that claim the time spent is most influential. It was shocking that 70% said assignments were too long. Similarly studies by Paschal et al [23] found contradictory opinion that students who spend little or no time on assignment are unlikely to work longer on a assignments, just because more has been assigned. A study conducted by [29] extensive assignments were associated with a comparatively unfavorable development in overall student achievement [3,18]. The p value reveal that there was a significant difference in frequency of having assignment in the course of study. Similarly, Barry J Zimmerman [4] found significant relationship between frequency of assignment and average studies achievement in grades. Parents should be encouraged to serve in a supporting role [27]. Many studies have focus on assignment as a link between home and school [22]. The assignment process often includes a review of parental involvement [16,18]. It is necessary to provide some guidance on the purpose of the assignment by parents [19,30]. The findings of this study indicate the same. It was clear and expected that living with parents is better for students than living with spouse or have children. Students in level V have high response mean with respect to other levels. Finally Occupation of Father has an effect on students response since self – employed or semi-skilled. Father had higher mean on their children attitude of doing assignments. Some students have educated parents and technology at their disposal, but others live in homes without supervision [15]. In a recent study [12] found that for many parents it is required to give assignments which do not require a high level of subject matter knowledge [11,14] and students must stay organized by setting goal [20,21].

## 5. Conclusion

Assignment practices are a strong academic activity in which students need to receive assistance from their spouse and/or parents. Female students are more significantly perceived the assignment practices in nursing courses. According to Vatterott [29] at its, assignment in reasonable amounts can support and enhance learning, provide feedback to teachers about learning and instill confidence within students when they successfully complete their assignments on their own. Perception is everything and student infer a lot from their environment.

## Competing Interests

The research investigators declare not to have any financial and non-financial competing interests regarding

the publication of this paper.

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