

EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS IN HOSPITAL PRACTICE IN NAWABSHAH

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18898711>

Keywords

Clinical Learning Environment, Clinical Practice Challenges, Communication Barriers, Hospital Training

Article History

Received: 08 January 2026

Accepted: 21 February 2026

Published: 07 March 2026

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Abstract

Background: Clinical practice is an essential component of nursing education that enables students to apply theoretical knowledge in real healthcare settings. However, nursing students often face various challenges in the clinical learning environment, which can negatively affect their learning experience, confidence, and professional development.

Objectives: The objectives of this study were to explore the challenges faced by bachelor's degree nursing students in the clinical learning environment, to assess the level of these challenges, and to determine the association between challenges in clinical learning and selected demographic variables.

Methods: A community-based descriptive research design was used for this study. The study was conducted at the nursing department, Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences, Peoples University of Medical and Health Sciences for Women (PUMHSW), Nawabshah. A total of 80 bachelor's degree nursing students were selected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were used.

Results: The study findings revealed that majority of students (68.8%) faced multiple challenges during clinical practice. Major challenges included poor communication with staff (54%), shyness, lack of staff cooperation (49%), inadequate knowledge of hospital policies (47%), patient rejection, language barriers (41%), and difficulty in linking theoretical knowledge with clinical practice (62%). Many students (60%) reported loss of confidence, reduced motivation, and negative emotional effects due to these challenges.

Conclusion: The study concludes that nursing students experience significant challenges in the clinical learning environment, which adversely affect their clinical performance, confidence, and learning outcomes. An unsupportive clinical environment can reduce students' interest and commitment to the nursing profession.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing is recognized as a one of the most challenging professions because nurses provide care to the both ill and healthy individual across diverse health care environment. Among the difficulties encountered by nursing students are weak communication with nursing staff, limited interaction with teachers and healthcare professionals, and other barriers related to interpersonal relationships and communication. Teaching and learning clinical nursing setting involves situational learning that is dynamic and often unpredictable. Clinical nursing education takes place in setting that is constantly changing within this environment, students are able to connect theoretical concept with real life practice and develop higher level reasoning skills.

Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick for well and in all settings. It includes the promotion of the health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Educating nurses consist of theoretical and practical training provided to nurses with the purpose to prepare them for their duties as nursing care professional.

Nursing education is providing a combination of theoretical and clinical learning experiences to train students with required knowledge, skill and attitude for undergraduate students. Assessing the challenges in clinical learning environment helps to implement necessary changes in their teaching and learning so that better outcomes are generated so, the researchers felt a need to evaluate the challenges faced by nursing in clinical learning environment. The objectives of this study are to explore the challenges in clinical learning environment among nursing students and find the association between challenges in clinical learning environment and selected demographic variables. Nursing is a hands on profession that requires a meaningful combination of theoretical content with practical skill, and these two complements each other. Nursing education enables nursing students to acquire appropriate knowledge, skills, communication, and behaviors and have a huge impact on community health. Clinical practice training includes a large part of nursing education and is mostly carried out in

clinical environments. The aim of clinical practice training is to enable students to transfer what they have learned in theoretical education into practice, to identify and solve problems, to develop their skills, and facilitate the development of competencies.

The purpose is to train nurse who adapt to and be successful in the ever changing practice environment. The importance of the clinical learning environment for quality nursing education has long been recognized. Interest in improving clinical learning environments has increased over the last two decades. Challenges in the clinical learning environment are forcing the nursing infrastructure to examine new learning methods and models for clinical practice

Students in professional courses, especially in nursing and other health sciences, commonly face multiple obstacles during their academic and clinical training these challenges include Lack of communication, staff issues, workload stress) these difficulties may reduce learning, skills confidence. Identifying and understanding these challenges is essential to improve support, teaching, and clinical outcomes

MATERIALS & METHODS

This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted to explore the challenges faced by undergraduate students in hospital practices. This study conducted in Peoples University of medical & health sciences nawabshah from November 17 to 17 January after obtaining approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB). A non-Probability convenience technique was used to select Participants. The sample size is 280 calculated using Rao Soft software with a 95% Confidence level and 5% margin of error. Inclusion criteria was students who were present and willing to participate. And students who refused to participate and has no clinical practice were excluded. Data were collected through structured questionnaire and analysis was done using SPSS version 25 with descriptive statistics for frequency and percentages.

RESULTS

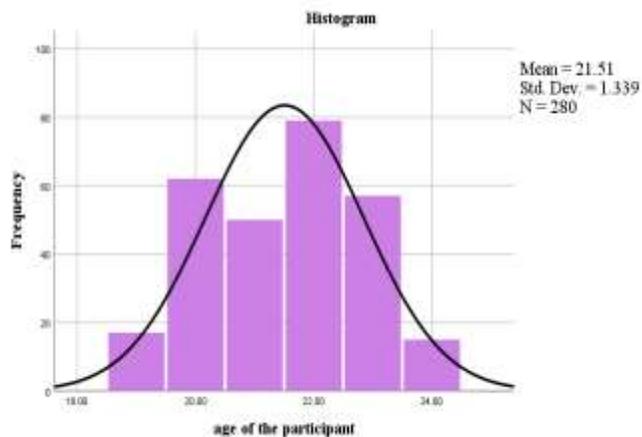


Figure 1: Age of Participants

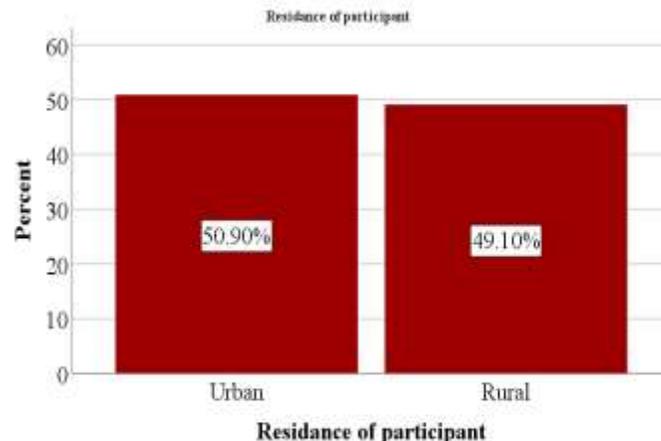


Figure 2: Residence of participants

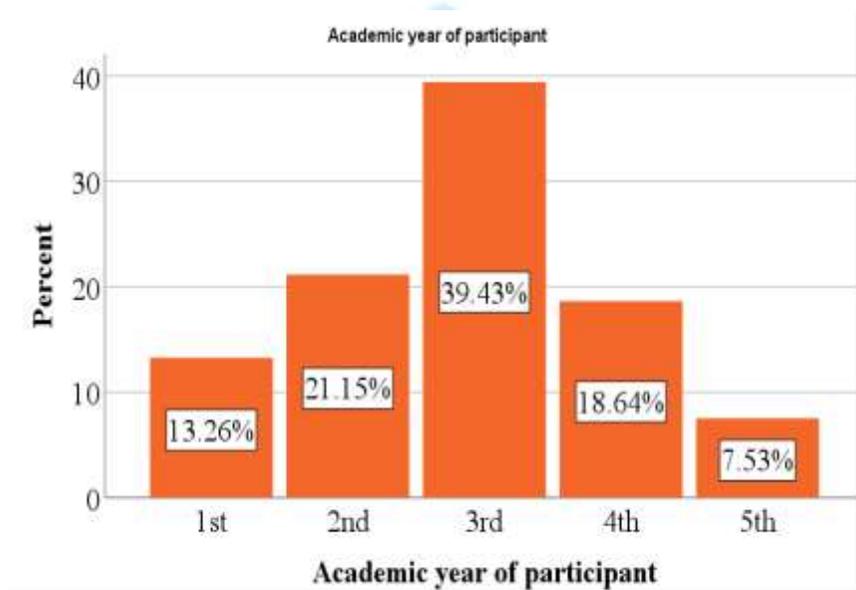


Figure 3: Academic Year of Participants

Table 1: EXPOLORING THE CHALLENGES

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Did you think effective communication skills between student and staff have a role in performance during clinical practice?	122(43.6%)	23(8.2%)	47(16.8%)	42(15%)	45(16.1%)
Does shyness is considered a barrier for you to communicate with staff during clinical practice?	77(27.5%)	73(26.1%)	54(19.3%)	64(22.9%)	10(3.6%)

Do the experience and competence of the academic advisor have a role in the students clinical practice?	74(26.4%)	46(16.4%)	72(25.7%)	61(21.8%)	26(9.3%)
Have you ever had a problem due to your lack of knowledge of the health facility policies and regulation?	50(17.9%)	75(26.8%)	62(22.8%)	79(28.2%)	13(4.6%)
Does staff lack of cooperation with the student in the clinical environment have a role in practice and learning to apply procedures to him?	79(28.2%)	48(17.1%)	54(19.3%)	65(23.2%)	33(11.8%)
Have you been rejected by the patient in applying the procedures him?	67(23.9%)	53(18.9%)	77(27.5%)	54(19.3%)	28(10.0%)
According to your experience in the clinical environment are regulation that prevent the student from applying the procedures?	86(30.7%)	36(12.9%)	56(20.0%)	69(24.6%)	32(11.4%)
Is the language or nationality of the staff a barrier to the student in the clinical environment?	58(20.7%)	50(17.9%)	71(25.4%)	58(20.7%)	35(12.5%)
Have you ever been assigned to work that is not a requirement for clinical practices?	67(23.9%)	38(13.9%)	70(25.0%)	68(24.3%)	36(12.9%)
Is the clinical environment adequately prepared to suit the need of students to implement procedure?	53(18.9%)	53(18.9%)	74(26.4%)	57(20.4%)	43(15.4%)
Does the student face an obstacle is linking the theoretical parts its clinical practices?	81(28.9%)	33(11.8%)	57(20.4%)	65(23.2%)	44(15.7%)

Table 2: Exploring the Challenges

Do the difficulties students face in the clinical practice make them lose confidence in them self and their skills?	100(35.7%)	30(10.7%)	50(17.9%)	57(20.4%)	43(15.4%)
Do these difficulties reduce students in trust and passion in the applying procedure they learn in the clinical setting?	59(21.1%)	61(21.8%)	66(23.6%)	77(27.5%)	17(6.1%)
If you face some difficulties affect the competency and experience of the students and the production of the nursing with to low qualities in the future?	52(18.6%)	69(24.6%)	58(20.7%)	71(25.4%)	29(10.4%)
Do these difficulties case the students of choose and other fields of work instant of nursing in the future?	77(27.5%)	40(14.3%)	57(20.4%)	71(25.4%)	34(12.1%)

Do difficulties lead to disturbance of communication and interaction skills of students?	73(26.1%)	58(20.7%)	48(17.1%)	71(25.4%)	29(10.4%)
Does the students have a negative feeling if he and she is rejected by patient and staff?	63(22.4%)	57(20.4%)	58(20.7%)	67(23.9%)	67(23.9%)
Do s these difficulties lead the student to lose confidence in his and her teacher and other?	48(17.1%)	70(25.0%)	44(15.0%)	74(26.4%)	42(15.0%)

DISCUSSION

The study participants, with a mean age of approximately 21.51 years and a slight majority residing in urban areas, predominantly comprised students in their 3rd academic year. This demographic profile suggests that the reported challenges are experienced by young adults who are actively engaged in the core phase of their nursing education, often a period of intensive clinical exposure. This study results are the significant role of communication and interpersonal dynamics. A large proportion of students (43.6% strongly agreed, 8.2% agreed) recognized the vital role of effective communication with staff in clinical performance, shyness was identified as a significant barrier to communication for over half of the students (27.5% strongly agreed, 26.1% agree. Similar study of nursing students at Wolaita Sodo University found that 79% students reported clinical learning challenges.

This suggests a critical disconnect where students acknowledge the importance of communication but struggle to enact it due to personal factors. Furthermore, a lack of staff cooperation (28.2% strongly agreed, 17.1% agreed and language or nationality differences (20.7% strongly agreed, 17.9% agreed). were also perceived as significant obstacles, indicating systemic issues in the clinical environment that hinder effective interaction and learning. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions that not only build students' communication skills but also foster a more inclusive and supportive environment among clinical staff. Similar study in quantitative study 64.4% students reported dissatisfaction with their clinical learning environment.

The study also revealed several structural and policy-related challenges within the clinical environment.

The percentage of students reported problems stopping from a lack of knowledge regarding health facility policies and regulations (17.9% strongly agreed, 26.8% agreed). This suggests inadequate orientation or access to crucial operational guidelines, which can impede safe and effective practice. Moreover, a significant portion of students felt that regulations sometimes prevented them from applying procedures (30.7%), and many were assigned non-clinical work (23.9%). Similar study reported that these issues indicate potential inefficiencies in clinical placement design or supervision that detract from direct learning opportunities. The perception that the clinical environment is inadequately prepared (18.9% strongly agreed, 18.9% agreed), further points to deficiencies in resources, structure, or support necessary for optimal student learning.

The cumulative effect of these challenges profoundly impacts students' psychological well-being and professional trajectory. A substantial majority of students reported a loss of confidence in themselves and their skills (35.7%) due to difficulties in clinical practice. These difficulties also reduced trust and passion in applying learned procedures for many (21.1% strongly agreed, 21.8% agreed). The struggle to link theoretical knowledge with clinical practice, reported by 28.9% of students, is a critical pedagogical concern, indicating a gap in applying academic learning to real-world scenarios. Furthermore, experiences of patient and staff rejection generated negative feelings (22.4% strongly agreed, 20.4% agreed), further eroding confidence and potentially impacting their interactions with patients and colleagues in the future. Alarming, these difficulties led a considerable number of students (27.5% strongly agreed, 14.3% agreed) to consider choosing other fields of work instead of

nursing. This finding suggests a potential long-term impact on the nursing workforce, with implications for retention and recruitment in the profession. The past study revealed that perceived disturbance of communication and interaction skills (26.1% strongly agreed, 20.7% agreed), coupled with a loss of confidence in teachers (17.1% strongly agreed, 25.0% agreed), and highlights the far-reaching consequences of these challenges on students' overall development and their perception of educational support.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study clearly indicate that nursing students encounter numerous challenges during their clinical rotations. Communication-related issues emerged as one of the most significant obstacles in the clinical learning environment. Although students recognized the importance of effective communication with healthcare staff, many reported difficulty in communicating due to shyness, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence. Poor interaction with staff nurses and language or nationality differences further limited students' ability to participate actively in patient care. These communication barriers not only restricted learning opportunities but also contributed to feelings of isolation and anxiety among students.

Another major challenge identified in the study was the lack of cooperation and support from hospital staff. Many students reported that staff nurses were often too busy to provide guidance or viewed students as an additional workload rather than learners. In some cases, students were assigned non-clinical tasks that were not relevant to their learning objectives. Such practices reduced hands-on learning opportunities and negatively affected students' motivation and professional identity. A supportive relationship between students and clinical staff is essential for effective learning; however, the findings suggest that this relationship is often weak or absent in the current clinical settings.

The study also highlighted structural and organizational issues within the clinical learning environment. A considerable number of students reported inadequate orientation to hospital policies and regulations, which led to confusion, fear, and hesitation in performing clinical procedures.

Additionally, some hospital rules and regulations were perceived as barriers that prevented students from practicing certain procedures. The lack of a well-prepared clinical environment, including limited resources, overcrowded wards, and high patient loads, further hindered students' ability to practice skills effectively and confidently.

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