

# Attitude of Under-graduate Nursing Students towards Clinical Duties - A cross sectional study

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Nursing programmes are designed as a combination of theoretical knowledge and clinical practice; therefore, students are introduced to clinical practice step-by-step. The attitude toward the clinical practice of students decides how these students will achieve their clinical objectives and put their theoretical knowledge into practice.

**Methods:** It is a cross-sectional descriptive with a study population of nursing students enrolled in 4-year BSN at any institute of nursing sciences in Khyber Pukhtankhwa. Among the study sample of 330 participants, 21 students with incomplete information were skipped from the study. After testing for validity and reliability, data were collected on a modified questionnaire with yes and no options.

**Results:** Positive attitude of 1<sup>st</sup> year students was (89%), 2<sup>nd</sup> years were (84%), 3<sup>rd</sup> years were (81%), and 4<sup>th</sup> years were (83%), while the negative attitude of 1<sup>st</sup> year students was (11%), 2<sup>nd</sup> year was (16%), 3<sup>rd</sup> year was (19%), and 4<sup>th</sup> year was (17%). The overall positive behaviors of the participants were (81%), mean of (257.42) and standard deviation (48.91), while the overall negative behaviors of the participants were (19%), mean of (52) and standard deviation of (48.91). There is evidence from this study that nursing students have a positive attitude toward clinical duties. A good number of students show a negative attitude towards the idea that there should be a change in the clinical setting, while some students report less interaction with the instructor, while some students face difficulty in learning clinical skills and facing patients.

**Conclusion:** There should be changes in clinical settings and good interaction with students in clinical areas to guide skills development and develop boldness to face the patients.

**Keywords:** Nursing students, Clinical duties, Skills, Theoretical knowledge, Attitude

## INTRODUCTION

Nursing education is a growing and rising profession in Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Up to now, the single public sector university in the province of Khyber has recognized and affiliated 94 nursing colleges. Most of these colleges have been affiliated in the last 5 years. Nursing education programmes are designed by the regulatory bodies with higher authorities to categories theory and clinical duties. Nursing as a profession needs a complete nursing education that is based on practical experience and academic knowledge gained over time<sup>1</sup>. Nursing programmes comprises theoretical studies and practical training both, Students attend theoretical studies at the start of the nursing program, and then they are gradually introduced to the clinical setting. Clinical education is considered to be an essential and integral part of the nursing education programme<sup>2</sup>. In the last two decades, the clinical learning environment has been a focus in nursing education to prepare competent, quick clinical judgment, and sensible decision-making nurses<sup>1</sup>. In Pakistan, as well as in other countries, clinical education accounts for more than half of the formal education in nursing<sup>3</sup>. Allowing student nurses to do clinical duties in a variety of clinical settings is the greatest opportunity to put into practice, what they learned in the institute<sup>4</sup>.

Attitudes play a vital role in accomplishing goals, alertness to consequences, and effective handling of complex information<sup>5</sup>. The attitude of nursing students toward clinical duties focus to how the students will achieve their clinical objectives and implement your theoretical knowledge into practice. The attitude toward clinical duties of nursing students could be affected by staff student interaction, the institute and hospital relationship, and the clinical environment<sup>6</sup>. Public sector tertiary care hospitals have their own nursing institute, so the students of public sector institutes don't face issues in assigning clinical duties. On the other hand, the nursing students of private institutes face issues because the majority of these institutes don't have their own hospital; therefore,

multiple institutes send their students to one tertiary care hospital. There are differences in the approaches among both public and private institute students.

A study conducted in Andhra Pradesh, India in 2013, to assess the attitudes of nursing students, According to the findings; there was a significant difference in total attitude between male and female students toward the nursing profession (t value 2.24)<sup>7</sup>. In another study, Oyetunde et al (2013) show that nurse attitudes toward and knowledge of ageing may influence their work expectations as well as how they care for and approach their clients. With an ageing population and accompanying chronic illness, as well as decreased physical functionality and increased dependency, the demand for nurses with the correct attitude, knowledge, and skills will rise<sup>8</sup>.

In a study conducted by Bjrk et al (2014) to assess the perception of nursing students toward clinical settings, the study results showed that due to the lack of skills of nursing staff in clinical areas, the attitude and perception of nursing students under their supervision<sup>9</sup>.

In a study by Aragaw et al in 2019, it was found that, the student-staff communication, the availability of compulsory tools in the clinical setting, and the learning atmosphere influence the nursing student's attitude toward clinical duties. According to the results, the majority of nursing students (57.1%) have a negative attitude while only 42.9% show a positive attitude towards clinical work<sup>10</sup>.

In another study by Mugoh & Kamau in 2020, the results showed that nursing student interest is noted in clinical duty due to research, because it improves clinical learning whatever the attitude is negative or positive<sup>11</sup>.

## METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

The sample size were calculated for the study which was 330, using the Open-Epi calculator, with a 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error, 50% prevalence of nursing colleges in Khyber Pukhtankhwa Pakistan for this quantitative descriptive study. During analysis the data of 21 students were not completed, therefore 309 student's data were calculated. Data was collected

Received on 04-05-2022

Accepted on 07-07-2022

from April 6 to April 25, 2022; through an online questionnaire. The instrument for data collection was a modified questionnaire<sup>12</sup>, which contained two parts: the first was about demographic data (including gender, age, year of study, and marital status), and the second part contained 25 questions with a dichotomized option of yes/No. The study questionnaire was reviewed by four expert nurses, and then a pilot study on 30 students was conducted. The reliability for internal consistency of the study instrument was (Kuder Richardson 20 - 0.91). At the start of the questionnaire, there was an option to consent that the participation of the students would be purely voluntarily and their data would be kept confidentially. Data was collected from various nursing institutes across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The sampling technique for the study was simple random sampling. The inclusion criteria for the study was that the participant be enrolled in the 4-year BSN programme in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan and willingly participate. Research was started after IRB permission.

**RESULTS**

**Demographic characteristics:** Among 309 nursing students, the majority of the participants 274(89%) were male and the female participants 35(11%). The major age group among the participants was 21-25 years old 216(70%), while the 18-20 year age group was 80(26%), and the 26-30 year age group was only 13(4%). The majority of the participants were from the 4th year BSN 171(56%), followed by the students from the 3rd year 72(23%), the 2nd year 56(18%), and the 1st year 10(3%). Most of the participants were single 277(90%), and married 32(10%) (Table 1).

**Attitude of nursing students toward clinical duties:** The answers collected from the participants in this study were in the form of yes and no, where "yes" means "positive attitude" while "no" means a negative attitude. The participants' responses to the questions regarding attitude were mostly positive. In questions like "Liking and enjoying clinical duties, importance of clinical duties and tasks, preparing always for clinical duties, students are respected by nursing staff, fulfilling patient needs, introducing them as nurses and providing them with dignity, the majority of responses of the participants are positive. In some cases, the students show negative attitudes towards clinical duties, like being nervous when hearing about clinical, lack of confidence while interacting with patients, being assigned to a hospital that is not suitable for their clinical skills, and some students face difficulty in learning the skills (Table 2).

Table 1: Demographic data of the participants (n=309)

Characteristics	Categories	n	%age
Gender	Male	274	89%
	Female	35	11%
Age	18 – 20 years	80	26%
	21 – 25 years	216	70%
	26 – 30 years	13	4%
	31 – 35 years	0	0%
BSN (year)	1 <sup>st</sup> year	10	3%
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	56	18%
	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	72	23%
	4 <sup>th</sup> year	171	56%
Marital status	Single	277	90%
	Married	32	10%

**Comparing the Positive and Negative attitude of nursing students by years toward clinical duties:** Comparing the attitudes among the different years' students' shows that the majority of the participants show a positive attitude toward clinical duties because it is part of their programme and necessary to implement their theoretical knowledge. The students of the first year (semester 1 and 2) show a mean of 8.92 and a positive response (89%), which is high compared to other students of the BSN program. The 2<sup>nd</sup> year (semester 3, 4) shows an 84% positive attitude and a mean of 47.2, while the 3rd year (semester 5, 6) shows an 81 percent positive attitude and a mean of 56.3, and the

4th year (semester 7, 8) shows an 83% positive attitude and mean of 143.04 toward clinical duties (Table 3).

**Overall attitude of nursing students:** The overall attitude of nursing students was divided into positive (yes) and negative (no). The positive attitude was (81%), and the negative attitude was (19%) (Fig. 1), which indicates that the majority of participants have a positive attitude toward clinical duties (Table 4).

Table 2: Attitude of nursing students toward clinical duties

Questions	Yes	No
I like clinical duties	294 (95.1%)	15 (4.9%)
I enjoy my clinical duties when assigned by my institute	290 (93.9%)	19 (6.1%)
When my duty is assign for clinical duties, I became nervous.	170 (55%)	139 (45%)
I like clinical duties more than my school sessions	240 (77.7%)	69 (22.3%)
I like clinical duty, because I learn more practically.	290 (93.9%)	19 (6.1%)
I like clinical tasks because it is enjoyable.	288 (93.2%)	21 (6.8%)
I always make myself prepared for clinical duties.	270 (87.4%)	39 (12.6%)
I feel scare when interact with patients and duty staffs.	180 (58.3%)	129 (41.7%)
The nursing staffs show respect to the nursing students.	259 (83.8%)	50 (16.2%)
The hospital where my duty is assigns his favorable for me.	275 (89%)	34 (11%)
The hospital supervisor frequently interacts with me in clinical stations.	192 (62.1%)	117 (37.9%)
My clinical instructor provides me positive feedback when I have a question.	275 (89%)	34 (11%)
Sufficient materials are available in my clinical station for patients and for me.	238 (77%)	71 (23%)
My pleasure is to meet the patient needs	290 (93.9%)	19 (6.1%)
I maintain the dignity of patient	293 (94.8%)	16 (5.2%)
The assign staff supervise me in my clinical practice	254 (82.2%)	55 (17.8%)
I feel proud to introduce myself as a nurse to patient	282 (91.3%)	27 (8.7%)
Nurses as a job which is needed by the community	291 (94.2%)	18 (5.8%)
During clinical duties, the staff members communicate well with me.	264 (85.4%)	45 (14.6%)
Other medical staff shows respect to nurses and nursing students.	242 (78.3%)	67 (21.7%)
The clinical skills I learn in hospital, I applied it in my community and home.	271 (87.7%)	38 (12.3%)
I think the present hospital I assign is not good for me	121 (39.2%)	188 (60.8%)
I find difficulty in learning the clinical skills	158 (51.1%)	151 (48.9%)
A clinical duty is interesting to use theoretical knowledge into skills.	282 (91.3%)	27 (8.7%)
I feel that the theoretical knowledge I learn in institute is necessary for clinical practice.	286 (92.6%)	23 (7.4%)

Table 3 Comparison among students by year of positive and negative attitudes

Years	Positive Attitude		Negative Attitude	
	Total number with (%)	Mean ±SD	Total number with (%)	Mean ±SD
1 <sup>st</sup> Year students	223 (89%)	8.92 ± 1.4	27 (11%)	1.08 ± 1.4
2nd Year students	1180 (84%)	47.2 ± 5.9	219 (16%)	8.76 ± 5.9
3rd Year students	1459 (81%)	58.3 ± 12.4	341 (19%)	13.64 ± 12.4
4th Year students	3576 (83%)	143.04 ± 25.7	713 (17%)	28.52 ± 25.7

Figure 1: Overall Positive and negative Attitude of nursing students

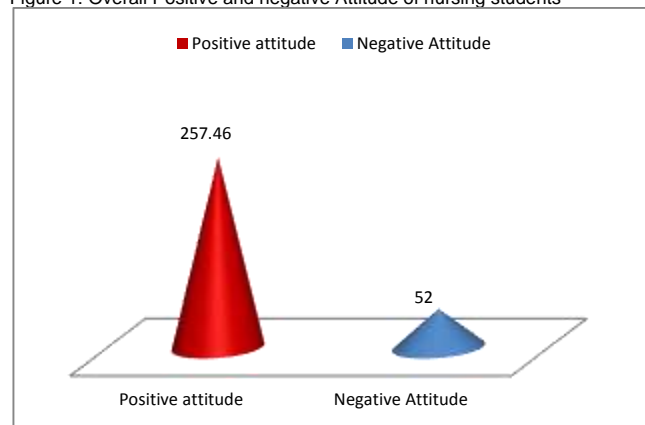


Table 4: Overall attitude of nursing students toward clinical duties

	Total Numbers with %	Mean $\pm$ SD
Overall Positive Attitude	(81%)	257.46 $\pm$ 48.91
Overall Negative attitude	(19%)	52 $\pm$ 48.91

**Factors Affecting students attitude toward clinical duties:** The overall attitude of nursing students is positive throughout the data collection, but there are certain factors which affect the attitude of nursing students toward clinical duties (Table 5).

Table 5: Factors affecting the attitude of nursing students toward clinical duties

Factors affect attitude of nursing students	n	%age
I think the present hospital I assign is not good for me	188	60.8%
I find difficulty in learning the clinical skills	151	48.9%
When my duty is assign for clinical duties, I became nervous.	139	45%
I feel scare when interact with patients and duty staffs.	129	41.7%
The hospital supervisor frequently not interacts with me in clinical stations.	117	37.9%
Sufficient materials are not available in my clinical station for patients and for me.	71	23%

## DISCUSSION

In a study conducted in Ethiopia, the majority of students (97.9%) agreed that clinical practice is the major area of the nursing and midwifery professions<sup>12</sup>. Similarly, in our study, the participants (81%) showed a positive attitude toward clinical duties. In another study, students who practiced in a well-equipped hospital were more likely to have a favorable attitude towards clinical practice<sup>13</sup>. Compared to our participants, (60%) showed a negative attitude toward their current clinical setting, while 23% showed a negative attitude toward sufficient resources available in their hospital setting. A study conducted showed that in clinical setting, the nurses should welcome and respect the student nurses in clinical duties<sup>14</sup>. Similarly, in our study, the students had a positive attitude of (83%) that the clinical nurses treat them well, respect them and communicate with them well.

A study conducted in Iran shows that "Maintaining patient confidentiality" and "protecting patients' right to privacy" were the most essential nursing professional values for nursing students<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, in our study, the students' attitude toward maintaining the dignity of the patient was (94%) and the attitude of the students to being happy to meet patient needs was (93%). In a study, seniority was found to be associated with having a favorable attitude towards clinical practice. In a study, nursing students reported feelings of happiness and joy as a result of their interest in the clinical environment and belongingness<sup>16</sup>. In our study, (95%) and (93%) of nursing students reported liking and enjoying clinical duties, respectively.

## CONCLUSION

According to the data collected, the response towards clinical duties was positive. The majority of the students currently enrolled in the 4-year BSN programmes in different institutes of Khyber Pukhtankhwa like and enjoys clinical duties, because this is the area where they will achieve their objectives, learn clinical skills, and implement their theoretical knowledge. The study indicates that despite the positive attitude toward clinical duties, there are

some areas where a change is required, like supervision from hospital staff in clinical practice and patient interaction. There is also a need to perform clinical duties in multiple hospital settings for wide exposure.

**Conflict of Interest:** As an author I declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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