



## NURSING STUDENTS' SATISFACTION REGARDING CLINICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT PRIVATE NURSING SCHOOLS IN KARACHI

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** The setting in which nursing students receive practical experience and apply their academic knowledge in authentic healthcare situations is referred to as the clinical learning environment.

**Aim:** To assess the level of satisfaction among nursing students regarding clinical learning environment.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in two private nursing institutes in Karachi, Pakistan. A total of 250 participants were involved through convenient sampling, and the data was collected from the participants through an adopted questionnaire.

**Results:** Most nursing students expressed positive sentiments about the clinical learning environment. Around 75% of participants agreed with a good working relationship with the preceptor.

**Conclusion:** Overall, the data suggest that the clinical learning environment is satisfactory, and with targeted improvements, nursing schools can further enhance the overall learning experience and better prepare students for their future roles in patient care.

**Keywords:** Nursing, Students, Satisfaction, Clinical, Learning, Environment

## **Introduction**

The education of nursing students comprises academic domain and clinical training. A crucial and essential component of the nursing curriculum is clinical training (1), and the standard of nursing care is crucial to the effectiveness of healthcare as a whole (2). Clinical learning or clinical training is the learning/training that takes place in medical settings and incorporates the use of scientific and educational information and abilities, as well as values and attitudes. It also involves performing nursing treatments on patients in a real-world clinical setting. Nursing students acquire competencies and abilities via practical experiences with their surroundings and patients (3). Clinical training in the actual healthcare setting has always been at the core of the nursing curriculum, enabling students' transition from the theoretical classroom setting to the practical world. This is in addition to contemporary nursing theories; Experiences in clinical education enhance the development of the psychomotor, intellectual, and emotional skills required for reliable entrance practice (4).

A clinical learning environment (CLE) is "the setting in which learners learn and build their clinical abilities, including the physical setting, instructional personnel, nurses, and other healthcare providers." During their clinical training, it is essential for the learning, clinical abilities, logical thinking, judgment, supervising abilities, and educational interest of nursing students (5). In other words, CLE is a setting where the conceptual syllabus elements can be combined with hands-on to develop professional abilities and attitudes in a psychologically secure setting (6). Similarly, an effective CLE includes a helpful managerial environment, excellent patient care, dynamic student learning opportunities, and a respectable psychosocial team atmosphere (7). In contrast, there are many difficulties to clinical learning in the clinical learning environment, such as fear of potential peer criticism, making errors, interacting with patients and the healthcare members, impending critically ill patients, unsuitable behavior of clinical staff nurses, the ward setting, the culture and difficulty of care, and the administrative relationship between students, clinical and educational organizations (8, 9). The clinical learning environment is essential, especially when student nurses receive practical training and must confront the realities of their profession (10).

Satisfaction refers to accomplishing one's wishes and ambitions (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2016). Students' satisfaction is "A temporary attitude, coming from an assessment of their academic experience." In addition, it is the product of a system of education, services, and facilities and contributes to student devotion (11). Adam et al. (2021) stated that although the clinical learning setting is crucial for learners' satisfaction with practicum experience, it may also cause stress and apprehension for student nurses worldwide (12). In addition, Abouelfettoh and Al Mumtin (2015) stated that the following factors as having an impact on nursing students' learning placement practices: (I) student nurses' perceptions in clinical learning environments; (II) the guidance provided by licensed nurses in clinical settings; and (III) the degree of engagement between students and nurse teachers (13). Therefore, this is necessary to assess the satisfaction of nursing students regarding their clinical learning environment. The study's findings will be communicated to the nursing organization to create a good, encouraging and helpful clinical environment for the students to improve their clinical skills and self-efficacy.

## **Aim of the study**

The nursing students still had poor satisfaction regarding their clinical environment (14), which can impact their learning process. Therefore, this study aims to examine the level of satisfaction regarding their clinical environment among nursing students of private nursing schools.

## **Methodology**

A Cross-sectional study was conducted in two private nursing institutes in Karachi, Pakistan, from September 2022 to January 2023.

The study population comprised generic BSN students from the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> years. Generic BSN students willing to participate in this study were included, and BSN 1<sup>st</sup>, Paramedics, and Post RN students were excluded.

The investigator used a double-component questionnaire for data collection. Component-I: Demographic profile of nursing students. Consists of age, gender, academic year, and clinical placement. And Component II is a Clinical environment evaluation tool adopted from the study (Cooper, s, .2020). This tool consists of 17 items that evaluate the nursing student's satisfaction regarding the clinical environment. Four clinical experts reviewed the tool, and their suggestions were incorporated. Furthermore, the pilot study was conducted on 10% of the total sample size, and the calculated Cronbach alpha value is 0.85.

Before the data collection, study approval, and data collection Permission were taken from the School of Nursing and Health Sciences perspective. After the approval, the primary investigator visited the respective institute for the feasibility of the participants, and the primary researcher gave a brief explanation to the study participants. Written consent was taken before data collection. During the data collection, the primary investigator observed the participants whenever they faced difficulty. All things were explained to them. Moreover, the data collection was completed in four days.

The collected data were analyzed through SPSS version 26—descriptive statistics for frequency distribution and percentage were calculated. Study approval was taken from the respective institute. The data were collected from the selective participants after the permission of the participants signed respective private nursing institutes and a written informed consent form. There was no harm to the participants and no direct benefits to them. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained; data will not be shared with anyone except the primary investigator and study supervisor. The soft copies of the study tool were secured by password, and the hard copies were kept in a locked cupboard.

## Results

Table 1 shows the age of the participants, which includes less than twenty years 30 (12.0%), twenty to twenty-five years 205 (82.0%), and thirty or more than thirty 15 (6.0%). Regarding gender, 240 participants (96.0%) were male, and 10 participants (4.0%) were female in the study. According to the academic year, 130 (52.0%) are in BSN second year, and 80 (32.0%) are in BSN third year. 40 (16.0%) belong to BSN fourth year. During their clinical rotation, the students were assigned to various units. Approximately 32.8% of the participants they worked with were from the general ward majority, and 30.8% were from other departments, amounting to 250 individuals.

**Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the study participants n=250**

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
< 20 years	30	12.0%
20 to 25 years	205	82.0%
> 25	15	6.0%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	240	96.0%
Female	10	4.0%
<b>Academic Year</b>		
2nd year	130	52.0%
3rd year	80	32.0%
4th year	40	16.0%
<b>Clinical Placement</b>		
Medical ward	38	15.2%
General ward	82	32.8%
Pead's ward	23	9.2%
MICU	16	6.4%
Emergency	14	5.6%
others	77	30.8%

Table 2 shows the responses of the participants to the questionnaire. The students in their clinical

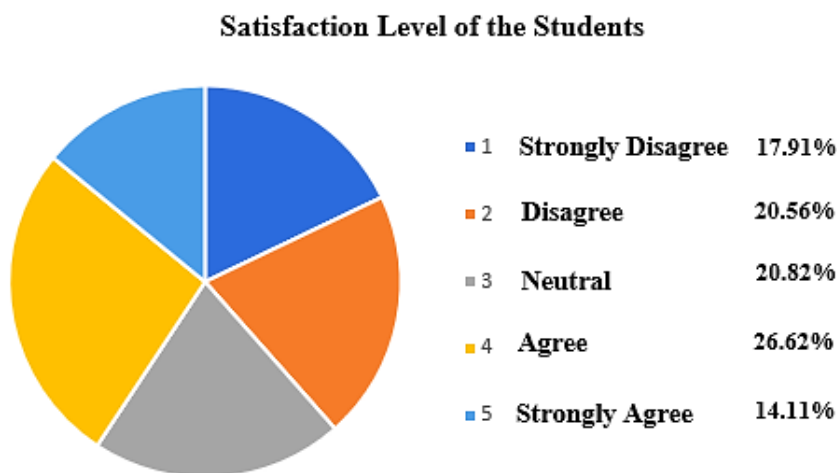
placement regarding the statement "Good relation with the team" were found neutral (30.8%), and "Good relation with preceptor" mostly agreed (52.0%). However, the majority of students agreed to terms of their motivation, eagerness, self-confidence, learning opportunities, preceptor support, and self-autonomy during their learning clinical experiences. On the other hand, students showed disagreement regarding their integration as part of the team, satisfaction with the handling of their questions, procedure explanations provided by the team, the level of encouragement they received from preceptors and the team to ask questions, as well as the information provided about patient care plans.

**Table 2 Responses of the participants to each statement**

S no.	Statements	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1.	Good relationship between the team and me.	6.9%	16.9%	30.8%	23.8%	21.5%
2.	Treated as part of the team	40%	38%	12%	4.6%	5.4%
3.	Good working relationship with the preceptor.	12%	10%	5%	52%	23%
4.	Questions satisfactorily answered.	13.6%	36%	21.4%	15%	14%
5.	Team explained procedures to me.	52%	17.2%	16%	11%	3.8%
6.	The more I gave, the more I got.	9.2%	6.9%	23.8%	37.7%	22.3%
7.	Motivated and eager to learn.	15.4%	5.4%	16.2%	35.4%	26.9%
8.	Preceptor had a good sense of humor.	10.8%	18.5%	21.5%	38.5%	10.8%
9.	Preceptor showed me learning opportunities.	6.2%	10.0%	5.4%	26.9%	21.5%
10.	Preceptor encouraged students to ask questions.	9.2%	21%	38%	20.8%	11%
11.	Patients were cared for appropriately.	10.8%	15.4%	20.8%	36.2%	16.2%
12.	Nurses informed me about their patients' cares.	10.7%	57%	13.3%	12%	7%
13.	Team encouraged me to ask questions.	23%	37%	19.1%	12.7%	8.2%
14.	Preceptor was confident about his/her skills.	13.1%	10.8%	21.5%	39.2%	15.4%
15.	Preceptor placed a great deal of importance on my learning needs.	36%	19%	25.3%	10.7%	9%
16.	Preceptor relied on me.	10.8%	12.3%	23.8%	43.1%	9.2%
17.	Preceptor favored my autonomy.	10.0%	11.5%	18.5%	45.4%	13.8%

The satisfaction levels of participants in their clinical learning environment, as depicted in Figure 1, varied. A notable percentage of participants, 45 (17.91%), strongly disagreed, and 51 (20.56%) disagreed with their experience. Additionally, 52 (20.82%) remained neutral, while a significant

number of students, 67 (26.62%) and 35 (14.11%), were found to be in agreement and strong agreement, respectively, regarding their clinical learning environment.



**Figure 1 Satisfaction Level of the Students**

## Discussion

The clinical learning environment is a critical aspect of nursing education, directly impacting the competency and preparedness of nursing students as future healthcare professionals (15). However, there is a limited understanding of nursing students' satisfaction and perceptions regarding their clinical learning experiences. So, this study aims to assess nursing student satisfaction regarding their clinical environment.

The current study result showed that the gender of the participants was categorized into males and females. Where males were 96.0%, and females were 4.0%. In contrast, a study was conducted in Iran, in which the study result showed that males were 31.80% and females were 68.20% (16). Moreover, the current study result showed that age-wise participants were divided into three categories: less than 20 years, 20 to 25 years, and above 25 years. Another study was conducted in Egypt to support the current study (1).

The current study result shows the participant's academic years were categorized into three 2<sup>nd</sup> years, 3<sup>rd</sup> years, and 4<sup>th</sup> years from 2<sup>nd</sup> years participants were selected randomly. Similarly, another study was conducted in Malaysia; the study result showed a random selection of the participants, which supports this study (17). In addition, the result of the current study showed that around 14.11% to 26.62% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with statements regarding Clinical Satisfaction respectively. In contrast, another study was conducted in Spain, and the result showed that the participants strongly agreed, and around 26.4% to 77.7% strongly disagreed and agreed, respectively (18). This statement was also contradicted by another study conducted in Finland in 2021 (19).

The current study's findings revealed participants' responses to the statement "The team explained the procedures to me" as 52% strongly disagreed, 17.2% disagreed, 3.8% to 11% agreed, and strongly agreed. Additionally, a study conducted in Spain produced similar results for the same statement: 52% strongly disagreed, 18.1% disagreed, 10.9-13% agreed, and strongly agreed (18).

Moreover, the findings revealed that 78% of the participants disagreed with the statement "Treated as part of the team." Another study also supports this finding that students are considered not part of the team. They consider an outsider (19). The nursing mentor should consider the students as part of their team because students' happiness with the clinical learning environment is influenced by the interaction between the student and the mentor (20).

In the present study, the results demonstrated 38% of participants' responses were neutral to the statement "Preceptor encouraged students to ask questions," and 21% disagreed. Similarly, a study

conducted in Spain yielded supportive outcomes for the same statement (18). Regarding the statement, "Team encouraged me to ask questions," 37% of respondents indicated that they disagreed with the team they worked with. Similarly, another study supported the current findings that the clinical instructor did not design engaging activities nor engaged in the group and the students completed the same tasks throughout the clinical rotation. The clinical instructor talked rather than listened to the students, did not allow them to express their opinions and interests, and did not negotiate the clinical activities with them (21).

Concerning the statement, "Preceptor placed a great deal of importance on my learning needs," 36% of students disagreed, stating that they felt their learning objectives were not considered. Many expressed that the preceptors fulfilled the department's requirements without genuinely caring about their learning needs. For students to master clinical practice abilities, a supportive, respected, and encouraging clinical learning environment and atmosphere are necessary. An encouraging learning environment, student orientation to the workplace, and a good rapport between students and instructors create an excellent clinical learning environment. Students can better form relationships with other team members, actually feel involved in ward activities, and have greater motivation to master new abilities during clinical practice because of the conducive learning environment (22).

The current study showed that 26.9% of participants strongly agree with "I was motivated and eager to learn." In the same way, a study was conducted in Spain, and the result showed that 67.9% of participants strongly agreed with this statement (18).

The current study population's overall satisfaction with their clinical learning environment is 40.73%. Conversely, a study conducted in Singapore revealed that most nursing students expressed a moderate level of satisfaction with their clinical learning environment, indicating favorable but not overly positive impressions (Woo and Li, 2020). Another study revealed that satisfaction was highly evaluated (mean 4.16 of 5; 83.2% agreement) (23).

### **Conclusion**

According to the study's findings, undergraduate nursing students at private nursing schools in Karachi, Pakistan, were quite satisfied with their clinical learning environment. It can be because of the clinical learning setting, where students get their clinical experience, which is well-structured. The learning environment, in the opinion of nursing students, was satisfactory. However, certain statements still indicate that a significant number of students experienced disagreement both with their clinical learning environment and their preceptor.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the conclusion, a similar study should be conducted on a large population, including all health workers. Furthermore, this is vital to conduct an interventional study to enhance the satisfaction level of the health workers.

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