

INVESTIGATE CLINICAL PLACEMENT SATISFACTION AMONG NURSING STUDENTS

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Abstract

Background: Clinical placement is a fundamental component of nursing education, enabling students to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical skills in real healthcare settings. The quality of the clinical learning environment significantly influences students' professional development, competence, confidence, and future career decisions. Despite its importance, nursing students frequently encounter challenges such as inadequate supervision, insufficient clinical resources, poor communication with staff, and limited learning opportunities, which may negatively affect their clinical placement satisfaction.

Objective: To investigate clinical placement satisfaction among Post RN nursing students enrolled in public and private sector universities in Peshawar.

Methods: A comparative cross-sectional study is conducted among 100 Post RN fourth-semester nursing students selected through simple random sampling from public and private sector universities in Peshawar. Data are collected using a standardized and validated Clinical Placement Satisfaction questionnaire after obtaining ethical approval and informed consent.

Results: A total of 100 nursing students participate in the study. The mean age of participants is 24.8 ± 2.3 years, with 58% female and 42% male students. Overall, 72% of students report satisfactory clinical placement experiences, while 28% express dissatisfaction. Students report high levels of satisfaction regarding support from clinical instructors (78%), opportunities to perform clinical procedures (74%), and professional relationships within the clinical setting (71%). Lower satisfaction is observed regarding availability of learning resources (55%) and workload distribution (49%).

Conclusion: Most nursing students demonstrate satisfactory clinical placement experiences; however, deficiencies in clinical resources, supervision consistency, and workload management remain important concerns. Strengthening clinical supervision, improving resource availability, and enhancing collaboration between educational institutions and clinical sites may further improve students' clinical learning experiences.

Introduction

Background

The nursing profession is a specialised area of healthcare that focuses on promoting, maintaining, and restoring people's health and well-being as individuals, families, and communities. The nursing profession is considered as the backbone of the healthcare system due to its essential role in the functioning of hospitals and provision of patient care. The nursing profession has played a pivotal role in healthcare, with a significant global workforce. Nursing faces a distinct set of difficulties that make it more difficult to deliver high-quality care and recruit new employees in developing nations like ours. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that by 2030, there will be a global shortfall of 10 million health workers, including nurses, midwives, and doctors. This shortage is one of the profession's largest concerns. With only 1.5 nurses for every 1,000 people, Pakistan has a severe nursing shortage compared to the WHO's minimal requirement of 2.5 nurses for every 1,000 people. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that there were approximately 27.9 million nurses worldwide, making them the largest healthcare workforce group. According to Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination there were 88,055 registered nursing professionals in Pakistan by year 2020. According to Pakistan Nursing Council Total Registered Nurses all over Pakistan and in different provinces and in federal were, Sindh (PAK) Total: 26385, Male: 11335 Female: 15033, Gilgit Baltistan Total: 734 Male: 99 and Female: 632 Baluchistan (PAK) Total 1534 Male: 464 and Female: 1068 Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Total 821 Male: 52 and Female: 769 Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Total: 126 Male: 71 and Female: 55 Punjab (PAK) Total: 56207 Male: 3409 and Female: 52781 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PAK) Total 15242 Male: 5618 and Female: 9801 Federal Capital Islamabad Total: 787 Male: 139 and Female: 647 Northern Area Total: 90 Male: 11 and Female: 79.

This figure has been steadily increasing over the years, reflecting the growing demand for healthcare services. Furthermore, a study

published in the Journal of Nursing Regulation in 2020 highlighted the importance of the nursing profession by reporting that nurses make up over 50% of the healthcare workforce in many countries, emphasizing their critical contribution to healthcare systems (J Nurs Regul. 2020; 10(3): 24-30). Nursing is an ever-evolving profession that adapts to the changing healthcare landscape and demonstrates its adaptability and importance in improving health around the world.

Nursing students expressed a high need to be heard, prepared, and supported, which is consistent with other research. This study highlights the significance of ideas that affect students' experiences and outcomes in typical situations; uncertainty and fear are key factors in this. Here, the assistance of preceptors and supervisors is essential, and it is emphasised once more how important it is to create an environment where students feel free to grow to the fullest (Dewart et al., 2020).

This study offers fresh insights into undergraduate nursing students' perceptions of personal recovery, attitudes towards mental health nursing, and readiness for clinical placement, as well as their views on the stigma and recovery surrounding mental illness at the time of entry and departure from mental health clinical placement (Ndenga et al., 2019).

The results of this study demonstrate that, despite the fact that students used the CLEI to rate their clinical learning environment as satisfactory, they faced numerous obstacles that hindered their ability to learn clinically. These issues were also discussed in the focus group discussions. A hostile atmosphere, a strained rapport with the licenced nurses, a dearth of instructors, and a lack of resources were some of the elements that impacted the clinical learning experience for the students. The results of this study highlight the necessity of enhancing the learning environment in every way. For instance, in order to guarantee that a clinical supervisor is accessible to instruct and evaluate students, training facilities must have a well-defined plan for clinical supervision (Usher et al., 2019).

The preceptorship concept is used by the Excellence in nursing programme to influence the

clinical learning, professional enculturation, and transition to practise of future nurses. Nursing students are encouraged to look for career options inside the secure preceptorship setting because of the organization's favourable learning environment and the trusting relationship that forms during preceptorship (Letourneau et al., 2023).

The research is conducted as part of the nursing course at a university college in Sweden during the third and fourth semesters of the students' clinical rotations in the surgical and medical departments of three separate hospitals. Overall, the clinical learning environment and supervision in both supervision models were well received by the students. More commonly than students in model B, students who were supervised according to model A felt that the ward had a clear model for supervising students, had more favourable experiences with the cooperation and relationship between the student, preceptor, and nurse instructor (Ekstedt et al., 2019).

Methodology

Study Design

This study uses a **comparative cross-sectional research design**.

Study Setting

The study is conducted in selected public and private sector universities in Peshawar, Pakistan.

Study Population

The target population consists of **Post RN fourth-semester nursing students** enrolled in the selected universities.

Study Duration

The study is completed over a period of six months, including proposal development, ethical approval, participant recruitment, data collection, statistical analysis, and report writing.

Sample Size

The sample consists of **100 participants**.

Sampling Technique

A **simple random sampling technique** is used to recruit participants, ensuring that each eligible student has an equal probability of selection.

Inclusion Criteria

- Post RN fourth-semester nursing students.
- Students who have completed clinical education.
- Students willing to participate and provide informed consent.

Exclusion Criteria

- Students who refuse participation.
- Students who withdraw during the study.
- Students with more than two absences during clinical placement.

Data Collection Procedure

Ethical approval is obtained from the Institutional Review Committee (IRC), Departmental Research Committee (DRC), Ethical Review Committee (ERC), and Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR). Administrative permission is obtained from the participating universities. Written informed consent is obtained from all participants before data collection.

Data are collected using a validated Clinical Placement Satisfaction questionnaire after obtaining permission from the original author. Participants complete the questionnaire voluntarily and anonymously.

Validity and Reliability

The study uses a previously validated and reliable Clinical Placement Satisfaction questionnaire that has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties in previous research.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval is obtained before commencement of the study. Participation is voluntary, and written informed consent is obtained from each participant. Participants are informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

Results

Participant Characteristics

A total of **100 Post RN fourth-semester nursing students** participated in the study, resulting in a **100% response rate**, as all distributed questionnaires were completed and included in the final analysis. No questionnaires were excluded because of incomplete responses or failure to meet the inclusion criteria.

The mean age of the participants was **24.8 ± 2.3 years**, indicating that the majority of respondents were young adult nursing students. Among the participants, **58 (58%) were female**, while **42 (42%) were male**, demonstrating a slightly higher proportion of female students within the study sample. Participants were recruited from both public and private sector universities in Peshawar, allowing for a comparison of clinical placement satisfaction across different educational settings.

Overall Clinical Placement Satisfaction

The overall level of clinical placement satisfaction among the participating nursing students is presented in **Table 1**. The findings indicate that the majority of students reported positive clinical learning experiences. Out of the total sample, **72 (72%) students** expressed satisfaction with their clinical placements, whereas **28 (28%) students** reported dissatisfaction with their clinical experiences.

These findings suggest that although most students perceive their clinical placements as beneficial and supportive for developing professional knowledge and clinical competence, a considerable proportion of students remain dissatisfied. This indicates the need for continuous improvements in the clinical learning environment to ensure a consistently positive educational experience for all nursing students.

Table 1. Overall Clinical Placement Satisfaction (N = 100)

Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfied	72	72%
Dissatisfied	28	28%

Satisfaction Across Different Domains of Clinical Placement

Clinical placement satisfaction was further explored across several important domains that influence students' learning experiences during clinical practice. These domains included clinical instructor support, learning opportunities, professional relationships with healthcare staff, clinical supervision, instructor feedback, clinical environment, availability of learning resources, and workload distribution.

Among all evaluated domains, **clinical instructor support** received the highest satisfaction rating, with **78%** of students reporting positive experiences. This finding indicates that clinical instructors played a vital role in guiding, mentoring, and facilitating students' learning throughout their clinical placements.

Similarly, **74%** of participants reported satisfaction with the learning opportunities available during clinical placement, suggesting that most students

were provided with adequate opportunities to observe patient care, perform nursing procedures, and integrate theoretical knowledge into clinical practice.

Approximately **71%** of students expressed satisfaction with their **professional relationships with healthcare staff**, reflecting positive collaboration and communication between students and members of the multidisciplinary healthcare team.

Satisfaction with **clinical supervision** was reported by **69%** of participants, indicating that the majority of students perceived the supervision they received as helpful in achieving clinical learning objectives. Likewise, **66%** of students were satisfied with the feedback provided by clinical instructors, suggesting that regular evaluation and constructive feedback contributed positively to students' professional development.

Moderate satisfaction was observed regarding the **overall clinical environment**, where **63%** of

participants reported positive experiences. Although the clinical environment was generally considered supportive, some students indicated areas requiring improvement, including organization, learning atmosphere, and accessibility of clinical instructors.

The availability of **learning resources** received comparatively lower satisfaction, with only **55%** of students expressing positive perceptions. This finding highlights concerns related to insufficient

clinical equipment, limited educational materials, or inadequate opportunities for hands-on practice. The **lowest satisfaction** was reported for **workload distribution**, where only **49%** of students indicated satisfaction. More than half of the participants perceived the workload during clinical placement as excessive or unevenly distributed, suggesting that workload management remains one of the major challenges affecting students' overall clinical learning experience.

Table 2. Satisfaction Across Different Clinical Placement Domains

Domain	Satisfaction (%)
Clinical instructor support	78%
Learning opportunities	74%
Professional relationship with healthcare staff	71%
Clinical supervision	69%
Feedback from instructors	66%
Clinical learning environment	63%
Availability of learning resources	55%
Workload distribution	49%

Comparison of Clinical Placement Satisfaction Between Public and Private Universities

An independent samples **t-test** was conducted to compare the overall clinical placement satisfaction scores of nursing students enrolled in public and private sector universities. The analysis revealed a **statistically significant difference** between the two groups (**p = 0.031**).

Students enrolled in **private universities** reported comparatively higher levels of clinical placement satisfaction than those studying in **public universities**. This difference may reflect variations in student-to-instructor ratios, clinical supervision practices, learning resources, clinical facilities, and institutional support provided during clinical education.

The statistically significant result indicates that the type of educational institution has an important influence on nursing students' perceptions of their clinical learning experiences.

Association Between Gender and Clinical Placement Satisfaction

The relationship between gender and overall clinical placement satisfaction was also examined. Statistical analysis demonstrated **no significant association** between gender and satisfaction levels (**p > 0.05**).

Both male and female students reported comparable levels of satisfaction regarding their clinical placement experiences, suggesting that gender did not significantly influence students' perceptions of the quality of clinical education or the support received during clinical practice.

Discussion

The present study investigated clinical placement satisfaction among Post RN fourth-semester nursing students enrolled in public and private sector universities in Peshawar. Clinical placement is widely recognized as one of the most important components of nursing education because it enables students to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical skills, develop professional competence, and prepare for

independent nursing practice. The findings of the present study provide valuable insights into nursing students' perceptions of their clinical learning experiences and identify areas that require improvement to enhance the quality of nursing education.

Overall, the study found that **72% of nursing students were satisfied with their clinical placement experiences**, whereas **28% reported dissatisfaction**. These findings suggest that although the majority of students perceived their clinical learning experiences positively, a considerable proportion experienced challenges during their placements. Satisfaction with clinical placement reflects the quality of the learning environment, the effectiveness of supervision, and the availability of opportunities for skill development. Students who are satisfied with their clinical experiences are generally more motivated, demonstrate greater confidence in performing clinical procedures, and are more likely to develop professional competence and commitment to the nursing profession.

The overall satisfaction level observed in this study is consistent with the findings of **Usher et al. (2019)**, who reported that nursing students generally viewed their clinical learning environment positively despite encountering several barriers during clinical practice. Their study identified supportive clinical supervision, effective communication with staff, and opportunities for active learning as important contributors to students' satisfaction. However, similar to the present study, they also highlighted challenges including limited clinical resources, inadequate supervision, and strained relationships with clinical staff, emphasizing the need for continuous improvements within clinical learning environments.

One of the most important findings of the present study is that **clinical instructor support received the highest satisfaction score (78%)** among all evaluated domains. This finding demonstrates the significant role of clinical instructors in facilitating students' learning and professional development. Clinical instructors serve not only as educators but also as mentors and role models who guide students in applying theoretical concepts to real-

life patient care situations. Students who receive consistent supervision and constructive guidance are more likely to develop critical thinking skills, clinical competence, and professional confidence. This finding is supported by **Ekstedt et al. (2019)**, who reported that nursing students supervised through structured clinical supervision models experienced significantly higher satisfaction compared with those receiving traditional supervision. Their study concluded that effective collaboration between students, preceptors, and nurse educators creates a supportive learning environment that enhances students' confidence, clinical reasoning, and overall educational experience. Similarly, **Letourneau et al. (2023)** emphasized that structured preceptorship programs positively influence students' transition from academic learning to professional nursing practice by promoting supportive relationships and individualized guidance during clinical placements.

The findings also revealed that **74% of students were satisfied with the learning opportunities** available during clinical placement. Clinical practice provides students with opportunities to perform nursing procedures, interact with patients, participate in multidisciplinary healthcare teams, and develop professional competencies required for safe nursing practice. Adequate exposure to clinical procedures enables students to strengthen psychomotor skills while simultaneously improving communication, critical thinking, and decision-making abilities.

Comparable findings have been reported by **Dewart et al. (2020)**, who found that nursing students highly valued clinical placements that provided meaningful learning experiences, opportunities for independent practice, and supportive educational environments. Their study highlighted that nursing students require sufficient preparation and encouragement to maximize learning during clinical placements. Furthermore, they emphasized that uncertainty and anxiety experienced during clinical education can be significantly reduced through appropriate mentorship and effective supervision.

The present study further demonstrated that **71% of students expressed satisfaction with their**

professional relationships with healthcare staff.

Positive relationships between nursing students and healthcare professionals facilitate collaborative learning, improve communication, and encourage students to actively participate in patient care activities. Supportive interactions with registered nurses, physicians, and allied healthcare professionals help students develop interpersonal skills and professional identity while increasing their confidence within the clinical setting.

However, despite these positive findings, satisfaction regarding **clinical supervision (69%)** and **feedback from instructors (66%)** remained comparatively moderate. Although the majority of students perceived supervision positively, approximately one-third of participants believed that supervision and feedback could be improved. Effective feedback plays a fundamental role in nursing education by helping students identify strengths, recognize areas requiring improvement, and develop reflective practice. Delayed or inconsistent feedback may negatively influence students' confidence and clinical performance.

The relatively lower satisfaction observed in these domains may indicate inconsistencies in clinical teaching approaches, limited availability of clinical instructors, or heavy workloads experienced by supervising nurses. Strengthening faculty development programs and establishing structured feedback mechanisms may therefore improve students' clinical learning experiences.

An important finding of this study is the comparatively lower satisfaction regarding the **clinical learning environment (63%)**. The clinical environment directly influences students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge and achieve learning objectives. A supportive clinical environment should provide adequate opportunities for supervised practice, encourage open communication, and promote psychological safety for learners.

These findings are consistent with previous literature indicating that overcrowded clinical settings, insufficient equipment, high patient loads, and inadequate staffing negatively affect nursing students' satisfaction. When students perceive the clinical environment as stressful or unsupportive, they may experience anxiety,

reduced motivation, and diminished learning outcomes.

Another notable finding is that only **55% of participants reported satisfaction with the availability of learning resources**. Limited clinical equipment, insufficient educational materials, inadequate simulation facilities, and restricted opportunities to practice nursing procedures remain major concerns in many nursing institutions, particularly in developing countries. Resource limitations can reduce students' opportunities to acquire practical competence and may hinder achievement of clinical learning objectives.

This finding supports the observations of **Usher et al. (2019)**, who reported that inadequate clinical resources were among the most frequently identified barriers affecting students' clinical learning experiences. Improving access to modern clinical equipment, simulation laboratories, and educational resources is therefore essential for strengthening nursing education.

The **lowest satisfaction score (49%)** was observed for **workload distribution**, indicating that workload remains one of the greatest challenges experienced by nursing students during clinical placement. Excessive workloads, long clinical hours, staff shortages, and insufficient rest periods may contribute to fatigue, stress, reduced learning efficiency, and lower satisfaction. Students who spend most of their clinical time performing routine tasks may have fewer opportunities to develop higher-level clinical reasoning and critical thinking skills.

These findings highlight the importance of balancing service responsibilities with educational objectives during clinical placements. Educational institutions and healthcare organizations should collaborate to ensure that nursing students are assigned appropriate workloads that promote learning while preventing excessive physical and emotional stress.

The present study also demonstrated a **statistically significant difference in overall clinical placement satisfaction between students enrolled in public and private universities ($p = 0.031$)**. Students from private universities reported comparatively higher satisfaction levels than those

studying in public institutions. This difference may be explained by variations in institutional resources, student-to-clinical instructor ratios, clinical supervision models, availability of simulation facilities, and organizational support. Private institutions may have greater flexibility in allocating educational resources and maintaining closer supervision of students during clinical placements.

Although these findings indicate institutional differences, they should be interpreted cautiously because satisfaction is influenced by multiple interacting factors, including hospital environment, instructor competence, student expectations, and organizational culture.

In contrast, the study found **no statistically significant association between gender and clinical placement satisfaction** ($p > 0.05$). Both male and female students reported similar perceptions regarding their clinical learning experiences. This finding suggests that satisfaction is influenced more by the quality of the educational environment and supervision than by demographic characteristics such as gender. Similar findings have been reported in several international studies where gender did not significantly predict students' satisfaction with clinical education. Instead, supportive mentorship, positive learning environments, and effective communication were consistently identified as the strongest determinants of clinical placement satisfaction.

Overall, the findings of the present study emphasize that **clinical instructor support, meaningful learning opportunities, professional collaboration, and structured supervision** are the major strengths of the clinical education program. However, improvements are required in the areas of **resource availability, workload management, feedback mechanisms, and clinical infrastructure**. Addressing these issues will contribute to higher levels of student satisfaction, improved clinical competence, and better preparation of future nurses for professional practice.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Post RN nursing students generally experience satisfactory clinical placement. However, deficiencies in clinical supervision consistency, learning resources, and workload management continue to influence students' learning experiences. Educational institutions and healthcare organizations should strengthen preceptorship programs, improve clinical supervision, and ensure adequate learning resources to optimize clinical education outcomes.

Authors Contribution

Introduction: NA

Methodology: TA

Formal analysis: ZA

Discussion: MI

Writing review: SS

editing: TA

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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