

The Attitudes and Behaviors of Student Nurses on Clinical Practice at Uganda Martyrs Hospital, Lubaga, Kampala City: A cross-sectional.
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Abstract

Background:

Attitudes of nursing students towards clinical work have been attributed to some factors. The study aims to examine the Interconnected Influence of Attitudes and Behaviors on Student Nurse Clinical Practice.

Methodology:

A cross-sectional study design was used, and it utilized quantitative methods of data collection.

The study was carried out in Uganda Martyrs' Lubaga Hospital. The study targeted the nursing staff who worked with the student nurses in the care of patients in Uganda Martyrs' Hospital, Lubaga. The sample size was determined by the use of UNMEB research guidelines for diploma nurses, which gave a range of 30-60 respondents. A purposive sampling procedure was used, and it involved approaching staff nurses who took care of both inpatients and outpatients.

Results:

The respondents 16(53.3%) reported that student nurses related to the patients fairly well, while a minority 5(16.7%) reported that student nurses related very well with the patients.

Respondents 17(56.7%) reported that student nurses had a fair ability to show empathy to patients, while a minority of 1(3.3%) reported that some student nurses had a poor ability to show empathy to patients. 15(50%) reported that student nurses understood the element of keeping time to a small extent during practicum, while a minority, 2(6.7%), reported that some student nurses totally didn't understand the element of keeping time during practicum. Respondents 20(66.7%) reported that student nurses definitely didn't dodge practicum, while a minority of 2(6.7%) reported that some student nurses somehow dodged practicum.

Conclusion:

Factors affecting the attitude of student nurses towards nursing practice included: a fair relationship with patients, which affected the wellness pattern of patients, and the poor ability of student nurses to show empathy to patients.

Recommendations:

They should always remember to make the patients as comfortable as possible and minimize practicum absenteeism.

Keywords: Attitudes, behaviors, student nurses, clinical practice, nursing education, empathy, patient interaction, punctuality, practicum absenteeism, healthcare settings

Submitted: August 22, 2024 **Accepted:** June 12, 2025 **Published:** September 01, 2025

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Background of the study

Nursing is a practice-based discipline. Hence, clinical practice is regarded as an important component of nursing education (Fadana and Vember, 2021). However, according to Mamaghani et al. (2018), healthcare settings aren't necessarily the best places to learn. During clinical practice, various situations can arise, hindering the learning performances of students (Najafi Kalyani *et al.*, 2019). Given that nursing is unquestionably a more practice-oriented field, student nurses are more professionally prepared by the knowledge they acquire during their

practical placement than by the theoretical knowledge they acquire in the classroom. (Mugoh and Kamau, 2020; Awuah-Peasah et al., 2013; Mamaghani et al., 2018).

According to Aragaw et al (2019) & Mugoh and Kamau (2020), attitudes play a principal role in guiding human behavior toward achieving goals. The factors affecting knowledge, attitude, and practices of nursing students during clinical practice have been noted to be a topic of interest for research because whatever attitude students display to clinical work, be it positive or negative, it can either enhance effective clinical learning or mar the

acquisition of essential clinical skills (Mugoh & Kamau, 2020). Nursing students' attitudes toward clinical work and posting were shown to be negative by Aragaw et al. (2019). According to Aragaw et al (2019), 57.1% of the nursing students had negative attitudes towards clinical practice, while only 42.9% had a positive disposition towards clinical work. Attitudes exhibited range from punctuality to work resumption, willingness to carry out nursing procedures, relationship with inter-professional students, and respect for senior colleagues and nurse clinicians.

Attitudes of nursing students towards clinical work have been attributed to some factors. According to Bjørk et al. (2014), nursing students' attitudes and perceptions of clinical postings may be "related to a lack of qualified nursing staff that can cover the students' needs for supervision". Other determinants of nursing student attitudes to clinical work have been identified as unpleasant hard work in the hospital, working on holidays, lack of respect for work, and loss of interest in what they do (Awuah-Peasah et al, 2013; Koushali, Hajiamini, and Ebadi, 2012). Aragaw et al (2019) also assert that nursing Students' attitudes towards clinical work may be influenced by the clinical learning environment, student-staff interaction, attitude of preceptors, the availability of necessary equipment in a hospital setting, among others. The study aims to examine the Interconnected Influence of Attitudes and Behaviors on Student Nurse Clinical Practice.

METHODOLOGY

Study design and rationale

In this study, a cross-sectional study design was used, and it utilized quantitative methods of data collection. This research study design was preferred because it was less time-consuming, and in addition, the researcher collected data at once without following up with the respondents.

Study setting and rationale

The study was carried out in Uganda Martyrs' Lubaga Hospital, located approximately 5Km (3mi) in the Western part of Kampala city. It is located approximately 5.5Km (3 mi) southwest of Mulago National Referral Hospital. The hospital is located on Lubaga Hill, in the Lubaga division. The coordinates of Uganda Martyrs' Hospital, Lubaga are: 00 18'15.0"N, 320 33'10.0"E (Latitude: 0.304167; Longitude: 32.552778). The facility has a bed capacity of 274 inpatients and provides health care services mainly outpatient, i.e., antenatal services, general medicine, and maternity services. The facility was chosen since it offered room for student nurses to have a practicum, and it was also easily reached by the researcher.

Study population

The study targeted the nursing staff who worked with the student nurses in the care of patients in Uganda Martyrs' Hospital, Lubaga.

Sample size determination

The sample size was determined by the use of UNMEB research guidelines for diploma nurses, which gave a range of 30-60 respondents. Therefore, 30 respondents were sampled from Uganda Martyrs Hospital, Lubaga.

Inclusion criteria

This study included all staff nurses who consented to participation.

Study Variables

Independent variable

The independent variable of this study was the factors affecting nursing practice among student nurses.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable was nursing practice.

Research Instruments

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of both open and closed-ended questions in English, designed to assess the factors affecting the quality of practice of student nurses during their practicum in Uganda Martyrs Hospital, Lubaga.

Data collection procedure

After approval of the proposal, an introductory letter was obtained from the school administration, which was then presented to the research committee of Uganda Martyrs Hospital, Lubaga, Kampala district. The committee introduced the staff nurses who care for patients to the study. A self-introduction was made, and the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents. The purpose of the study was explained to each respondent. A questionnaire was given to each respondent who fulfilled the criteria for participation in the study. For confidentiality and anonymity, serial numbers were used instead of respondents' names, and the questionnaires were kept in a locked cupboard with the key kept safely.

Data management

In the process of data collection, each questionnaire was checked for completeness and accuracy before leaving the area of study. Filled questionnaires were kept properly in a locker for safety.

Data analysis

The data collected was analyzed by entering it in the computer using Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel 2013, where the data was represented in tables, graphs, pie-charts, and figures.

Ethical consideration

An introductory letter was obtained from the research committee of Lubaga Hospital Training School. This letter was presented to the hospital research committee seeking permission to carry out the study. Participants received an explanation of what the study was about, and only those who

gave consent participated. Confidentiality was ensured using serial numbers instead of names, and questionnaires were kept in a locked cupboard with the keys kept safely.

RESULTS
Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The study analyzed the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as age and nursing cadres. The findings were presented in Table 1

Table 1: Showing the socio-demographic data of respondents, n=30

Variable	Category.	Frequency.	Percentage (%)
Age	26-35 years	20	66.7
	36-45 years	7	23.3
	46-55 years	2	6.7
	Above 56 years	1	3.3
	Total	30	100
Gender	Male	15	50
	Female	15	50
	Total	30	100
Cadre in the Nursing Profession	Enrolled nurse/midwife	14	46.7
	Registered nurse/midwife.	16	53.3
	Total	30	100

From the table, the majority 20(66.7%) of the respondents were aged 26-35 years whereas the minority 1(3.3%) were aged above 56 years. Regarding sex, I got an equal number of respondents, 15(50%). Concerning the cadre in the

nursing profession, the majority, 16(53.3%), were registered nurses and midwives, while the minority, 14(46.7%), were enrolled nurses and midwives.

Assessing the attitude of student nurses towards nursing practice

Table 2 shows whether student nurses have the ability to relate well with patients, n=30

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellently well	9	30
Very well	5	16.7
Fairly well	16	53.3
Not at all	0	0
Total	30	100

From the table, the majority of the respondents, 16(53.3%), reported that student nurses related to the patients fairly well, while a minority, 5(16.7%), reported that student nurses related very well with the patients.

Table 3 shows whether student nurses have the ability to show empathy to patients, n=30

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	12	40
Good	0	0
Fair	17	56.7
Poor	1	3.3
Total	30	100

From the table, the majority of the respondents, 17(56.7%), reported that student nurses had a fair ability to show empathy to patients, while a minority, 1(3.3%), reported that some student nurses had a poor ability to show empathy to patients.

Assessing the behavior of student nurses towards nursing practice

Table 4 shows whether student nurses understand the element of keeping time during practicum, n=30

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
They understand it very well	8	26.6
They understand it to a small extent	15	50
They do not understand it well	5	16.7
They totally do not understand it	2	6.7
Total	30	100

From the table, the majority of the respondents, 15(50%), reported that student nurses understood the element of keeping time to a small extent during practicum, while a minority, 2(6.7%), reported that some student nurses didn't understand the element of keeping time during practicum.

Table 5 shows whether student nurses dodge practicum n=30

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Definitely yes	0	0
Somehow yes	2	6.7
Somehow no	8	26.6
Definitely no	20	66.7
Total	30	100

From the table, the majority of the respondents, 20(66.7%), reported that student nurses definitely didn't dodge practicum, while a minority, 2(6.7%), reported that some student nurses somehow dodged practicum.

DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic factors.

According to the study, the majority, 20(66.7%) of the respondents were aged 26-35 years, whereas the minority, 1(3.3%) were aged above 56 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were middle-aged and energetic staff nurses who easily observed and worked closely with the student nurses. With this group, it means these staff nurses had just started working.

Regarding sex, I got an equal number of respondents, 15(50%) of both males and females. This could be because the nursing profession has been infiltrated by males, too, thus having an equal number of respondents. This is

contrary to Killam, Carter, and Degges-White (2020), who found that the nursing profession was dominated by more females than males.

Concerning the cadre in the nursing profession, the majority, 16(53.3%), were registered nurses and midwives, while the minority, 14(46.7%), were enrolled nurses and midwives. This is due to the fact that most staff nurses have gone back to school to attain more knowledge and skills, and academic papers, thus attaining higher education levels. This implies that the personnel to mentor the nursing students are qualified enough.

Assessing the attitude of student nurses towards nursing practice.

The study results found that the majority of the respondents, 16(53.3%), reported that student nurses related with the patients fairly well, while a minority, 5(16.7%), reported that student nurses related very well with the patients. A

positive attitude and supportive environment encouraged student nurses in the practicum. This is in line with findings of (Hammerschmidt and Manser, 2019) that constructive criticism improves practice in the clinical setting, while negative criticism is an obstacle to effective practicum.

Assessing the behaviour of student nurses towards nursing practice.

The study results found that the majority of the respondents, 15(50%), reported that student nurses understood the element of keeping time during practicum to a small extent, while a minority, 2(6.7%), reported that some student nurses totally did not understand the element of keeping time during practicum. This is in line with findings of (Cekiso *et al.*, 2019) that student nurses' behaviours negatively affected their performance in practicum, as they showed an inability to demonstrate knowledge and skills, and poor communication skills with patients. This drew a conclusion that they were unmotivated to learn and work during nursing practice.

From Table 5, the majority of the respondents, 20(66.7%), reported that student nurses definitely did not dodge practicum, while a minority, 2(6.7%), reported that some student nurses somehow dodged practicum. This is in line with Awuah-Peasah (2013), who linked late reporting time and absenteeism from duty as it led to poor performance in nursing practice.

Conclusion

Factors affecting the attitude of student nurses towards nursing practice included: a fair relationship with patients, which affected the wellness pattern of patients, and the poor ability of student nurses to show empathy to patients.

Factors affecting the behaviour of student nurses towards nursing practice included: not understanding the element of keeping time during practicum, as this led to a commotion in the provision of services to the patients, and dodging of practicum by student nurses.

Recommendations

Factors affecting the nursing practice of student nurses during practicum were observed to be many and unattended to, as per the current study. However, there are strategies to implement to address these factors seen in this study.

Ministry Of Health

This should work hand in hand with the Ministry of Education and Sports to provide more teaching resources in the nursing schools, for example, textbooks, tutors, aids, and grants. This can be started by lobbying the government and creating an open and supportive culture where a good

foundation of student nurses yields better services for patients.

The ministry should further conduct training programs and workshops for student nurses through the governing bodies, i.e., UNASNM, to sensitize the students so as to improve their knowledge capacity.

Management of UMHL.

The hospital management should encourage open dialogue and provide opportunities for student nurses to share their experiences and concerns without fear of judgment.

Training and education: Ensure that student nurses receive pre-comprehensive training on practicum issues, including when and how to make duty reports, making patient beds, and how to carryout effective health education. This will equip them with the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours needed to work with during practicum sessions.

Staff Nurses in UMHL

Collaborate well with student nurses: Remember to address the core qualities of a nurse, like critical thinking, effective communication, empathy, and confidentiality, while on the ward with the student nurses, as it is crucial to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of implemented and theoretical ideas and make adjustments as needed to ensure the well-being of the patients.

To the students.

They should always remember to make the patients as comfortable as possible and minimize practicum absenteeism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my deepest gratitude to the Almighty God for enabling me to accomplish this work.

My sincere appreciation goes to my supervisor, Mrs. Akankunda Barbara Kansiime, for the time she has given to my research, through her technical support, guidance, and direction during the development of this research report.

I would also like to thank the management of St. Michael Lubaga Hospital Training School, headed by the Principal, Sr. Namuddu Jane Frances, tutors, and non-teaching staff. I extend my thanks also to the management of Uganda Martyrs' Hospital, Lubaga, for allowing me to conduct this research study from there.

In a special way, I thank my classmates for their academic support and advice rendered to me in preparation for this research report.

May God richly bless them all.

Abbreviations

UNMEB: Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examinations Board
UMHL: Uganda Martyrs Hospital, Lubaga
UNASNM: Uganda National Association of Student Nurses and Midwives

Source of funding

The study was not funded.

Conflict of interest

The author did not declare any conflict of interest.

Author contributions

Job Mukiibi was the principal investigator.
Barbara Kansime Akankunda supervised the research.
Jane Frances Namuddu supervised the research.

Data availability

The data is available upon request.

Author Biography

Job Mukiibi is a student at St. Michael Lubaga Hospital Training School.
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