



Factors related to self efficacy in the clinical skills practice among undergraduate nursing students in Da Nang city

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to determine nursing students' self-efficacy in clinical practice and related factors. **Methods:** A cross-sectional descriptive study on 247 nursing students in Da Nang city was conducted between September 2022 and April 2023. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, and the correlation tests was performed to evaluate the factors related to Self-efficacy in clinical practice of nursing students. **Results:** The study found that 38.5% nursing students showed a high level of clinical practice self-efficacy. Some factors related to the level of self-efficacy in clinical practice in cluding age, place of residence, academic year, Frequency of teacher's support, Student perceptions of teacher's presence in the clinical area, Frequency of Nurse's support, and Student perceptions of clinical nurse's presence in the clinical area ($p < 0.05$). **Conclusions:** It is essential to enhance the support from nursing lecturers and clinical nurses during clinical practice to foster self-efficacy in clinical practice among nursing students.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, nursing students, related factors, clinical skills

INTRODUCTION

Nursing plays a crucial role in improving health, disease prevention, and providing primary and community healthcare services. Achieving health for all depends on having a sufficient number of skilled and well-educated nurses and midwives who are dedicated to making a difference in people's lives ¹.

Clinical practice is a critical element of healthcare education. To acquire practical skills and attitudes, students need effective clinical teaching and learning. These competencies are essential for healthcare

professionals to practice their profession competently ². Good clinical practice skills are extremely important for undergraduate nursing students ³, and self-efficacy plays a significant role in the independent skills of nurses in clinical practice. During clinical practice, factors such as ineffective communication, unpreparedness, emotional reactions, stress, and self-consciousness can impact students ⁴. Several issues have been identified when studying factors influencing clinical practice in students, and research by Miao Yu et al., (2021) revealed one of the crucial factors affecting competency and skill in clinical practice is self-efficacy or belief

in one's own abilities⁵. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own abilities to achieve specific goals or tasks. Bandura identified self-efficacy as a person's belief in their capability to succeed in particular situations or accomplish a task. Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in approaching goals, tasks, or challenges^{6, 7}. Bandura (1986) proposed that the structure of self-efficacy beliefs includes an individual's assessment of their own organizational capabilities and their ability to perform necessary actions to achieve predetermined action goals. Self-efficacy beliefs are not related to the skills individuals possess but rather to their assessment of what they can do with any skills they possess⁸. Nursing students with higher self-efficacy tend to be more confident when facing unfamiliar barriers in completing tasks, especially when caring for patients. This confidence can help them overcome challenges and difficulties in the caregiving process, maintain resilience, and continue their efforts to provide high-quality services⁹.

There are several factors related to the level of self-efficacy in clinical skills practice among nursing students. A study has indicated that male nursing students have higher self-efficacy compared to females¹⁰. According to Abdal et al., there is a relationship between voluntary career choice in nursing and self-efficacy. The role of instructors also has a correlation; instructors can help increase students' self-efficacy and can also contribute to increased student anxiety¹¹.

At our university, nursing students have a unique opportunity to enhance their learning experience through practical training. With our applied practical training program, students are able to engage in clinical practice at hospitals from their

second year of study, allowing them to gain valuable hands-on experience and apply their knowledge in real-world settings. Self-efficacy is considered as a crucial predictor of clinical performance among nursing students¹². Nonetheless, limited research has been conducted on self-efficacy in the clinical practice of regular nursing students in Vietnam especially in Da Nang City.

To contribute valuable insights for educational institutions and nursing programs can design targeted strategies to promote self-efficacy and improve nursing students' overall competence and confidence in their clinical practice. This study, therefore, aimed to assess the level of self-efficacy in the clinical skills practice among undergraduate nursing students and identify its related factors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design and participants: From September 2022 to April 2023 a cross-sectional survey was conducted to evaluate the self-efficacy of nursing students in clinical skills through a Google Forms.

Inclusion criteria: Undergraduate nursing students, third and fourth academic year, who had completed at least one module of clinical practice in a hospital.

Exclusion criteria: Students were not willing to participate in research

Sample size: The single population proportion formula was used to determine the appropriate sample size for this study:

$$n = \frac{Z_{1-\alpha/2}^2 \times p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

Where: n: minimum sample size; Z = 1.96 (for a 95% confidence level); d = 0.05 (desired absolute precision); p = 0.142 (proportion of students with high self-efficacy level, based on the study¹³).

Plugging in these values into the formula, we can calculate the minimum sample size is 188 participants. In fact, our study involved 247 undergraduate nursing students.

Sampling method: This research used convenience sampling technique. The total number of students who met the selection criteria at the time of the study was 336 students. The Google Forms survey was sent to students through email and the class's social media groups and 247 responses were received. The response rate was 74%.

Measurements: A self-administered questionnaire consisting of the General information and Nursing clinical self-efficacy Scale was applied to collect data in this study.

The general information were developed by the researcher to detect information on age, gender, ethnicity, academic year, place of residence, preference for studying nursing, having clinical note-taking handbook, frequency of teacher support, student perceptions of teacher's presence in the clinical area, frequency of clinical nurse support, student perceptions of clinical nurse's presence in the clinical area.

Nursing clinical Self-efficacy Scale: The Nursing Clinical Self-efficacy Scale based on a study by Nguyen Ngoc Huyen (2019) ¹³ was used to assess the perceived

self-efficacy or confidence of nursing students in clinical skill practice. This tool, consisting of 30 items, measures students' belief in their ability to effectively perform various clinical skills and tasks. Participants rate their level of confidence for each item on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "not confident at all" and 10 indicating "very confident". The scores obtained from the scale are categorized into three levels: low self-efficacy level (1-2), moderate self-efficacy level (3-8), and high self-efficacy level (9-10). Regarding the scales reliability assessment a Cronbachs Alpha coefficient of 0.816 was computed which suggests a level of consistency, among the 30 nursing students who took part in the evaluation.

Data Analysis: All the collected data in this study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20. To describe the data, common descriptive statistics were employed, including the use of mean and standard deviation, frequency, and percentage. In order to analyze the relationship between related factors and students' self-efficacy in clinical skills practice, the Spearman correlation, Kruskal-Wallis, and Mann-Whitney tests were employed. A 95% confidence interval was utilized, and any difference that resulted in a p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Table 1. General Information of nursing students (n = 247)

Participants Information		Number (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	36	14.6
	Female	211	85.4
Age	Mean ± SD: 20.91± 0.84		
Ethnic	Kinh	207	83.8
	Other	40	16.2

Participants Information		Number (n)	Percent (%)
Academic year	3 th year	106	42.9
	4 th year	141	57.1
Place of residence	Rural	147	59.6
	Urban	100	40.5
Preference for studying nursing	Yes	232	93.9
	No	15	6.1
Having clinical note-taking handbook	Yes	241	97.6
	No	6	2.4
Frequency of teacher's support	Sometimes	87	35.2
	Usually	160	64.8
Student perceptions of teacher's presence in the clinical area	Anxiety	17	6.9
	Normal	102	41.3
	Confident	128	51.8
Frequency of Nurse's support	Rarely	5	2
	Sometimes	99	40.1
	Usually	143	57.9
Student perceptions of nurse's presence in the clinical area.	Anxiety	4	1.6
	Normal	144	46.2
	Confident	129	52.2

The results show that among 30 clinical skills of nursing, most students had the highest self-efficacy in Taking patients' vital signs (57.9%), Giving prescribed tablets at the correct times, and supervising the undesirable effects (53.4%), and Preparing and performing intravenous infusion (51%). However, students had the lowest self-efficacy mostly in caring for dying patients (21.5%), Establishing and maintaining intravenous catheters (21.95%), and Placing patients in an appropriate position (23.5%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Self-efficacy in practicing 30 clinical skills of nursing students (n = 247)

Clinical Skills	Level of Self-efficacy		
	Low; n (%)	Moderate; n (%)	High; n (%)
Taking client's ECG	0 (0%)	160 (64,8%)	87 (35,2%)
Giving a client drugs by injection as ordered	0 (0%)	124 (50,2%)	123 (49,8%)
Taking patients' vital signs	0 (0%)	104 (42,1%)	143 (57,9%)
Giving prescribed tablets at the correct times and supervising the undesirable effects	0 (0%)	115 (46,6%)	132 (53,4%)

Clinical Skills	Level of Self-efficacy		
	Low; n (%)	Moderate; n (%)	High; n (%)
Cleaning and instilling medication in a client's eyes, ears, or nose	0 (0%)	152 (61,5%)	95 (38,5%)
Dressing wound correctly	0 (0%)	144 (58,3%)	103 (41,7%)
Forming a strong interpersonal relationship with patients that enable them to seek help without embarrassment	0 (0%)	128 (51,8%)	119 (48,2%)
Forming a positive working relationship with the charge nurse and other nursing staff	0 (0%)	145 (58,7%)	102 (41,3%)
Removing a client's stitches	1 (4%)	157 (63,6%)	88 (35,6%)
Explaining treatment to the clients	0 (0%)	157(63,6%)	90 (36,4%)
Asking for instructions or for help with any procedures not understood	0 (0%)	142 (57,5%)	105 (42,5%)
Preparing and performing intravenous infusion	0 (0%)	121 (49%)	126 (51%)
Reporting patients' condition to a physician	0 (0%)	135 (54,7%)	112 (45,3%)
Establishing and maintaining intravenous catheters	0 (0%)	193 (78,1%)	54 (21,9%)
Coping with new environments following ward changes	0 (0%)	143 (57,9%)	104 (42,1%)
Injecting drugs or vaccines to neonates and children	1 (4%)	157 (63,6%)	88 (35,6%)
Placing patients in an appropriate position	2 (8%)	187 (75,7%)	58 (23,5%)
Perform respiratory therapy techniques: Breathing exercises, effective coughing exercises, chest percussion...	0 (0%)	142 (57,5%)	102 (42,5%)
Teaching patients how to self-inject insulin	0 (0%)	152 (61,5%)	95 (38,5%)
Applying oxygen therapy	0 (0%)	164(66,4%)	83 (33,6%)
Implementing Assessment and Nursing Intervention for Patients	0 (0%)	150 (60,7%)	97 (39,3%)
Collecting the patient's specimen	0 (0%)	130 (52,6%)	117 (47,4%)
Doing proper techniques of isolation	0 (0%)	124 (50,2%)	123 (49,8%)
Establishing urinary catheters	0 (0%)	186 (75,3%)	61 (24,7%)

Clinical Skills	Level of Self-efficacy		
	Low; n (%)	Moderate; n (%)	High; n (%)
Splinting the limbs	1 (4%)	184 (74,5%)	62 (25,1%)
Performing CPR	0 (0%)	186 (75,3%)	61 (24,7%)
Psychological care of patients	0 (0%)	143 (57,9%)	104 (42,1%)
Giving a client an enema or suppositories	1 (4%)	178 (72,1%)	68 (27,5%)
Caring for dying patients	1 (4%)	193 (78,1%)	53 (21,5%)
Postoperative patient care	0 (0%)	155 (62,8%)	92 (37,2%)

The findings indicate that out of the 247 participants, 61.5% (152 students) reported a moderate level of Self-efficacy in clinical practice, while 38.5% (95 students) expressed a high level. Notably, none of the participants indicated low Self-efficacy in clinical practice (Table 3).

Table 3 . Level of Self-efficacy in clinical practice of nursing students (n= 247)

Level of Self-efficacy	Mean \pm SD	Min - Max	Frequent (%)
Low (< 2.5)	0	0	0
Moderate (2.5 - < 8.5)	7.21 \pm 0.64	5.8 – 8.47	152 (61.5)
High (\geq 8.5)	9.3 \pm 0.46	8.5 - 10	95 (38.5)

Table 3. Factors related to Self-efficacy in clinical practice of nursing students

Participants Information	Self-efficacy in clinical practice	p
Gender	Male	U = 3479.5* 0.421
	Female	
Age	Mean \pm SD: 20.91 \pm 0.84	r = - 0,223** 0.000
Ethnic	Kinh	U = 3947,5* 0.642
	Other	
Academic year	3 th year	U = 5677* 0.001
	4 th year	
Place of residence	Rural	$\chi^2 = 9.7***$ 0.008
	Urban	
Preference for studying nursing	Yes	U = 1395* 0.198
	No	

Participants Information		Self-efficacy in clinical practice	p
Having clinical note-taking handbook	Yes	U = 670*	0.759
	No		
Frequency of teacher's support	Sometimes	U = 4562.5*	0.000
	Frequently		
Student perceptions of teacher's presence in the clinical area	Anxiety	$\chi^2 = 34.684^{***}$	0.000
	Normal		
	Confident		
Frequency of clinical nurse's support	Rarely	$\chi^2 = 32.672^{***}$	0.000
	Sometimes		
	Frequently		
Student perceptions of clinical nurse's presence in the clinical area.	Anxiety	$\chi^2 = 13,872^{***}$	0,001
	Normal		
	Confident		

* Mann-Whitney, ** Spearman test, *** Kruskal-Wallis

DISCUSSION

Our research findings have revealed that the majority of students (61.5%) exhibited a moderate level of self-efficacy in clinical skills practice while 38.5% of the students reported a high level of self-efficacy. These findings are in line with research conducted among nursing students in three colleges in the Central Highlands region of Vietnam. In that study, 78.8% of the nursing students expressed a moderate level of self-efficacy in clinical skills practice, while 21.2% reported a high level of self-efficacy¹⁴. Additionally, similar results were obtained from a study conducted in Thai Nguyen, Vietnam, where 85.8% of students demonstrated a moderate level of self-efficacy, and the remaining 14.2% exhibited a high level of self-efficacy, with no students exhibiting a low level of self-efficacy in clinical skills practice¹³. Consistent with these results, a

study conducted in Iran by Marzieh Abdal revealed that there was 63.2% of nursing students had a moderate level of self-efficacy in clinical skills practice, while 36.8% exhibited a high level of self-efficacy, with no students demonstrating a low level of self-efficacy¹¹. These findings were entirely appropriate for the target population, which is students. Although the clinical practice provides students with opportunities to apply the nursing skills they have learned in school and helps bridge the gap between theory and practice, students face numerous challenges in the clinical environment, such as a lack of control, difficulties in management, and dealing with real-life situations¹⁵. Previous research has also shown that newly graduated nurses, with 1 to 3 years of experience, have a moderate level of self-efficacy in performing clinical skills (35.2 ± 5.25)¹⁶. It is notably that students

had high self-efficacy in taking vital signs, giving prescribed tablets at the correct times, supervising the undesirable effects, and preparing and performing intravenous infusion while lack of self-efficacy in caring for dying patients, establishing and maintaining intravenous catheters, and placing patients in appropriate positions. The results are similar to previous studies conducted in Thai Nguyen¹³ and Central Highland region¹⁴ and Iran¹¹. This may be because these techniques are performed more in internship time and students have been practicing more frequently. Engage more frequently in hands-on procedures that may contribute to a heightened sense of self-efficacy among them so the level of self-efficacy is also higher. On the contrary, difficult skills that are rarely used in clinical practice also decrease confidence. These skills are often performed in certain clinical departments. Access to these skills is also more difficult and requires students to have more experience to be able to improve their level of self-efficacy when performing these skills. These results suggest that increasing practice opportunities for nursing students is important to increase their confidence in performing clinical skills. In addition, the university should be equipped with a clinical simulation center for training in clinical skills before joining an internship at the hospital. This provides a safe environment where students can practice repeatedly without harming patients and allows them to practice confidently their clinical and decision-making abilities for various critical challenges they might encounter in their everyday tasks¹⁷.

There is a correlation between age ($p = 0.00$) and academic year ($p = 0.001$) with self-efficacy in clinical skills practice among nursing students at university. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by

Huyen N. N. (2020) and Zhang et al. (2015), which suggests a correlation between self-efficacy in clinical skills practice and academic semester as well as age^{10, 13}. The geographical area of residence is also found to be a factor related to self-efficacy in clinical skills practice, as the majority of nursing students at our University come from rural areas, accounting for 46.6%. However, Zhang et al. (2015) findings were inconsistent with these results. This author showed that there is no significant difference in self-efficacy between nursing students from rural areas and the city¹⁰. These finding suggests that by understanding which characteristics increase students' self-efficacy, educational institutions and nursing programs should consider these potential factors when designing interventions and programs targeted to enhance self-efficacy and promote the development of competent and confident nursing professionals.

The findings from analysis indicated that the frequency of teacher's support ($p = 0.00$) and student perceptions of teacher's presence in the clinical area ($p = 0.00$) were related to self-efficacy in clinical skills practice among nursing students. These factors were also highlighted in the study by Abdal et al. (2015) when examining the factors influencing belief in self-competence and clinical skills proficiency in nursing students, indicating that teacher's support can enhance students' belief in their own abilities while also potentially increasing their anxiety¹¹. In the study conducted by Gemuhay et al. (2019), survey results indicated that the main reason for ineffective clinical learning among nursing students was identified as the lack of nursing teacher in the clinical area¹⁸. Another study also confirmed the relationship between the motivating factors of lecturers and clinical nurses and clinical confidence; all students

tend to exhibit greater confidence when they receive assistance and motivation from their lecturers or clinical nurses while performing their skills¹⁴. These findings emphasize that clinical instructors play an important role in shaping the learning experience and can either help or hinder student learning and self-efficacy. Based on effective teacher and student interactions and student engagement strategies in the clinical setting, educational institutions can enhance students' self-efficacy and their overall competence in nursing practice.

In addition to nursing lecturers, clinical nurses indeed play a crucial role in supporting and guiding nursing students during their hospital practicum. Our research shows that regular support from clinical nurses ($p = 0.00$), and their presence during the practicing of nursing skills ($p = 0.001$), are correlated with nursing students' self-efficacy in clinical skills practice. This is consistent with the study by Gemuhay et al. (2019) which found a statistically significant correlation between clinical nurses and belief in self-efficacy during clinical practice. According to survey results, poor communication between nurses and students accounted for 49% of the reasons for poor clinical practice¹⁸. Clinical nurses and lecturers help develop the confidence levels of nursing students in the clinical field and train them to independently develop clinical skills¹⁹. The presence of mentors in the clinical setting aids students in achieving learning goals and becoming proactive learners²⁰. This finding highlights the importance of cooperation between nursing teachers and clinical nurses when guiding students in clinical environment. This collaboration not only ensures patient safety but also enhances students' self-efficacy in clinical practice.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our study examined self-efficacy in clinical practice among undergraduate nursing students at Da Nang city. Among the 247 students surveyed, the majority (61.5%) reported having a moderate level of self-efficacy in clinical practice, while 38.5% reported high self-efficacy. No students reported low self-efficacy.

Several factors were found to be associated with self-efficacy in clinical practice. These factors included age, academic year, hometown, the level of guidance in clinical skills by nursing lecturers, the presence of lecturers during nursing technique performance, the level of support from clinical nursing staff during internships, and the presence of clinical nursing staff in the clinical area ($p < 0.05$).

Based on these findings, it is evident that enhancing the guidance and direct support from nursing lecturers and clinical nurses during clinical practice is crucial for fostering self-efficacy among nursing students. It is suggested that teaching strategies should strengthen the team of clinical instructors to provide maximum support to nursing students during clinical practice to enhance their self-efficacy when performing nursing skills. Additionally, the education facility should coordinate with the hospital to organize training courses to improve clinical skills, especially complex and rare techniques for students before clinical practice. Furthermore, future research should analytical studies, expanding the research subjects, and research areas should be conducted to further understand the factors affecting self-efficacy in clinical practice of nursing students.

LIMITATION

This study was limited by using a convenience sample through Google Forms, a small sample size, and a limited geographical scope (one university). Therefore, it may not represent all the nursing students as a whole and may not be generalized beyond this institution.

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