The Relationship between Student Self-Efficacy and Students' Stress Level Undergoing Clinical Practice for the First Time

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Abstract
Introduction: *Stress is a common problem often experienced by nursing students during their clinical practice. Factors such as academic workload, new environments, and academic demands can increase the risk of stress. Self-efficacy are believed to play an important role in reducing stress levels.* **Objective:** *This study aims to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and first experience of clinical practice in students.* **Method:** *This study employs a descriptive correlational design with a cross-sectional approach, conducted at the Health Department of Subang State Polytechnic. The sample consisted of 120 students who would undergo clinical practice. Research instruments using questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted using the Spearman Rank test.* **Result and Discussion:** *The results showed that most students had high self-efficacy. There was a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and stress levels (r = -0.310; p = 0.040). Programs focused on enhancing self-efficacy should be optimized within the nursing education context to better prepare students and enhance their ability to handle challenges in clinical practice settings.* **Conclusions:** *Self-efficacy were found to play a role in reducing students' stress levels.*

Introduction

Clinical practice is a major part of nursing education that aims to make students professional and skilled. The experience gained during clinical practice greatly affects the improvement of nursing students' abilities, attitudes, and knowledge, as well as affects the extent to which they are prepared to face challenges in the world of work in the future. However, in this process there are often various obstacles, one of which is the pressure felt by students due to a lot of academic load, adjustment to a new place, and high expectations in practice. (Kereh & Rochmawati, 2022); (Putri et al., 2020)

The psychological challenges faced by students in the clinical practice environment not only affect students' mental health, but can also risk a decline in the quality of nursing care, hinder the achievement of educational goals, and have an impact on academic and clinical abilities. The (Siyamti & Maksum, 2023; Yuni et al., 2024) *World Health Organization* (WHO) (2024) said that the Southeast Asian region recorded a prevalence of mental health conditions of 13.2%, covering around 260 million people who experience various mental health disorders, including stress. In the Indonesian Health Survey (SKI) conducted by , it was stated that mental health problems, including stress in Indonesia have a prevalence of 630,827 people with West Java as the main contributor of 113,568 people. Based on research conducted by , it was found that 56.8% of students felt moderate stress during clinical practice caused by worry that they would get low scores during clinical practice. Health Development Policy Agency (2023)   Farodisa & Linggardini (2020)

Bandura explained that *self-efficacy* included in the part of social cognitive theory that reflects a person's belief in his or her ability to complete a given task (Galaresa & Fitriami, 2021). Resorts (2024) explains that *self-efficacy* It has an impact on the way students deal with difficult clinical situations, as well as on students' responses to the stress and burden arising from the actual workplace. Students who have *self-efficacy* tall ones are usually better able to cope with stress, get work done, and adjust in the practice setting.

A preliminary study conducted at the Department of Health of the Subang State Polytechnic found that most of the students experienced stress with varying degrees when they were going to undergo clinical practice for the first time. Research conducted by shows that Veronika et al. (2021) *self-efficacy* is needed in lowering stress levels. In addition, research conducted by proves that Albaqawi et al. (2025) *self-efficacy* plays a role in reducing stress levels during clinical practice. Although not explicitly stated, research data show that *self-efficacy* plays an important role in improving students' ability to cope with the pressures and demands of clinical practice.

Method

This research is quantitative with a correlational descriptive design using a cross-sectional approach. The population of this study is level III students of the Department of Health of the Subang State Polytechnic in the academic year who will undergo clinical practice totaling 120 students. Total sampling is used as a technique to obtain samples in this study, so that the entire population in this study will be used as a sample in this study. The measuring tools of this study include demographic data, the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) questionnaire, and the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS) 21.

Measuring self-efficacy using the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) which consists of 10 items divided into level, strength, and generality indicators and has been translated into Indonesian and tested for the validity of the construct, which is t > 1.96 by

the previous researcher, namely . As well as to measure stress levels using Novrianto et al (2019) the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS) 21 questionnaire which totals 21 items divided into three subscales, namely depression, anxiety, and stress and has been translated into Indonesian and tested for validity and reliability with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.912 for the entire subscale by the previous researcher, namely. Kinanthi dkk. (2023)

Data analysis was carried out using univariate analysis and bivariate analysis. Univariate analysis was carried out to determine the frequency distribution of respondent characteristics, self-efficacy and stress levels. Meanwhile, bivariate analysis was used to analyze the relationship between social support and stress levels and the relationship between self-efficacy and stress levels using the spearman rank test.

Result and Discussion
1. **Results**

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Man	14	12
Woman	106	88
Practical Experience		
<1 time	120	100
>1 time	-	1

Based on table 1 above, it is known that most of the respondents are female or as many as 106 respondents (88%). All respondents in this study have not had experience of undergoing clinical practice <1 time

Table 2
Self-Efficacy Frequency Distribution

Self-Efficacy	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
High	86	72
Poor	34	28
Total	120	100

Based on table 2 above, the distribution *of self-efficacy* owned by respondents during clinical practice found that almost all respondents had high *self-efficacy*, namely 86 respondents (72%)

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Stress Levels

Stress Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Normal	15	13
Mind	32	27
Moderate	68	57
Severe	5	3
Very Severe	-	-
Total	120	100

Based on table 3 above, the distribution of stress levels felt by respondents during clinical practice was found that half felt stress with a moderate level, namely 68 respondents (57%)

Table 4
The Relationship of Self-Efficacy to Stress Levels

			Self-Efficacy	**Stress Level**
Spearman's rho	**Self-Efficacy**	*Correlation Coefficient*	1.000	-.310
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.040
		N	120	120
	Stress Level	*Correlation Coefficient*	-.310	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	
		N	120	120

Based on the statistical test in table 4 about the relationship *between self-efficacy* and the stress level of students who will undergo clinical practice using *the spearman rank test.* Given the results of a significant relationship, as evidenced by a *p-value* of 0.040 which is smaller than the *p-value* of <0.05, then the hypothesis is accepted with a weak relationship and a negative direction, as evidenced by the coefficient value of -310. So it means that the higher *the self-efficacy* has, the lower the level of stress felt by students while undergoing clinical practice and vice versa, the lower *the self-efficacy* possessed, the higher the level of stress felt by students while undergoing clinical practice.

2.   Discussion
Self-Efficacy
Based on the results of research conducted at the Department of Health, Subang State Polytechnic, it shows that almost all respondents have high *self-efficacy*, especially in the aspect of *strength*. These findings show that most students feel confident and confident in their ability to practice in clinical practice and face academic demands. This is in line with research conducted by and reinforced by findings that also show that most nursing students have high Wijayanti & Salsabila (2024); Sidaria et al. (2024) *self-efficacy* in dealing with clinical practice.

The *self-efficacy* theory that has been developed by Bandura explains that *self-efficacy* consists of several aspects, one of which is the aspect of *strength* which refers to the level of confidence and resilience of a person in facing various challenges in completing tasks effectively. Students who have high *self-efficacy* typically experience less stress and can handle academic and clinical pressures well. This happens because students who have strong *self-efficacy* are confident in their ability to complete tasks and face obstacles, so they are more confident and flexible in dealing with difficult situations. Thus, the aspect of strength in (Sulistyowati et al., 2025) *self-efficacy* is an important factor that supports the success of students during clinical practice.

The results of the study show that the high confidence possessed by almost all nursing students in the third semester of the Subang State Polytechnic is evidenced by the results of the questionnaire which shows that students can always complete difficult tasks if hard work is an important factor in academic success and clinical practice. This confidence not only increases courage to face challenges, but also reduces anxiety and improves adaptability. This is supported by the fact that all students have been involved in clinical practice more than once, allowing students to gain valuable experience in developing skills, understanding a wide range of clinical situations, and strengthening confidence when applying nursing science in the field. Therefore, repeated clinical practice experiences are an important basis in improving the strength aspect of student

self-efficacy, which ultimately prepares students to face academic and professional challenges more confidently and efficiently

Stress Level

Based on the results of research conducted at the Health Department of the Subang State Polytechnic, it shows that most of them feel stress with a moderate level. These findings show that clinical practice is a stressful phase for students, especially for those who are undergoing clinical practice for the first time. This is also in line with research conducted by and reinforced by research that also found that most students who are undergoing clinical practice feel moderate levels of stress. Farodisa & Linggardini (2020) ; Derang et al. (2024)

The high prevalence of moderate stress in nursing students during clinical practice is a crucial concern in nursing education. The integration of clinical practice in the curriculum demands the application of theory, patient interaction, and the management of complex and dynamic clinical situations, thus triggering psychological stress. Causative factors include complexity of clinical skills, unpreparedness for real practice, adaptation of the hospital environment, heavy workload, and high expectations of supervisors. Although it has the potential to have a significant psychological impact, this moderate stress, if managed effectively, can be a driver of improving student competence and adaptation. (Wijayanti et al., 2023)

Although the psychological distress caused by stress can be significant, Lazarus and Folkman argue that effective stress management can encourage the development of coping strategies, increase mental resilience, and support academic achievement. In addition, good stress management is a motivator for individuals to develop coping strategies that focus on problem-solving and emotional regulation, thereby increasing resilience and performance under pressure. Therefore, students' skills in recognizing and dealing with stress in an adaptive way are crucial to support students' success in facing the challenges of clinical practice and the learning process in the field of nursing. Rashadri (2022)

This study reveals the high rate of moderate to severe stress in nursing students during clinical practice as a serious challenge in the field of nursing education. Although it has the potential to cause significant psychological distress, such stress, if managed effectively through the right coping strategies, can be a driver of improved ability, mental resilience, and academic achievement. The findings of the study also indicate that the majority of students involved in clinical practice are women with most being in their 20s, with women and individuals in the young adult age group likely to experience stress due to academic demands and pressure of the practice environment. Therefore, educational institutions need to equip students with adaptive stress management skills, such as integrating stress management-related materials in the educational curriculum to support success in facing the challenges of clinical practice and the learning process.

The *Relationship of Self-Efficacy* to Stress Levels

Based on the results of statistical tests, it shows that there is a weak relationship between *self-efficacy* and stress levels in a negative direction, which means that the higher *the self-efficacy* has, the lower the level of stress felt by students during clinical practice and vice versa. These findings are in line with the findings of research conducted by those who found a strong relationship with negative directions. This is reinforced by a study conducted by a study that also found a weak and negative relationship between Sulistyowati et al. (2025) Nazari dkk. (2025)*self-efficacy* and stress levels in nursing students.

Theoretically, this is in line with Bandura's theory of *self-efficacy*, which explains that individuals who are confident in their ability to perform certain tasks tend to be better at managing behavior, motivation, and emotions when faced with difficulties, including stressful situations. This high confidence results in a decrease in the perception of stress, as challenges in clinical contexts are considered tasks worth faced, not as fearful threats. In a clinical setting, nursing students are faced with a variety of stressors, such as responsibility to patients, interactions with clinical mentors, time constraints, and academic demands. High (Ozsaker et al., 2025) *self-efficacy* encourages the adoption of adaptive coping strategies, such as problem-solving-focused coping, which have been shown to be effective in lowering stress perceptions. (Nazari et al., 2025; Sulistyowati et al., 2025)

Barkhordari-Sharifabad et al. (2025) emphasizing that individual belief in *self-efficacy* is an important indicator for students in carrying out tasks and making decisions in a clinical context. High *self-efficacy* gives students greater confidence, makes students better prepared to face various challenges, and improves the ability to cope with the pressures and stresses that may arise during clinical practice. *High self-efficacy* serves as a protective factor that supports students in dealing with various stressors in the clinical environment, such as fear of making mistakes, pressure from the environment, and anxiety-related assessments.

This study shows that high *self-efficacy* in most nursing students during clinical practice is the main factor in reducing stress. Strong self-confidence increases confidence and mental readiness to face clinical challenges, allowing students to more effectively manage anxiety, overcome fear of making mistakes, and make decisions. Therefore, efforts to develop and improve *self-efficacy* through learning that emphasizes success and positive support are crucial for the psychological well-being and academic success of nursing students.

The application of learning methods such as *role play*, *practice based simulation models* in laboratory skills, nursing documentation and nursing communication into every course that will be carried out in clinical practice in hospitals will help reduce stress and increase *self-efficacy*. Especially if these methods are given repeatedly and sustainably, it will help the development of *self-efficacy* in each individual student so that it will reduce stress levels. In the first clinical practice experience of third-semester students, mentoring methods can be added involving students in the second semester through sharing and mentoring programs that can be accompanied by psychiatric lecturers to prevent excessive stress in nursing communication courses.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted on students of the Health Department of the Subang State Polytechnic Semester III who will undergo clinical practice, almost all students experience moderate stress. There was a weak relationship with the negative direction based on *the spearman rank* test between *self-efficacy* and stress levels, which showed that the higher the student'*s self-efficacy*, the lower the level of stress experienced.

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