

# A Study on caring character and clinical practice performance of nursing students

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## Abstract

**Background/Objectives:** This study was attempted to investigate the relationship between caring character and clinical practice performance and use it as the basic data for operating the caring character curriculum.

**Methods/Statistical analysis:** The subjects of this study were a sample of 300 nursing students in 3rd and 4th grade who experienced clinical practice for more than 6 months. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 23.0win program and analyzed by stepwise multiple regression to identify the effect on clinical performance.

**Findings:** The average score of the Nursing students' clinical practice performance was  $3.68 \pm 0.56$  And the average score of the caring character of nursing students was  $212.71 \pm 27.53$ . The relationship between general characteristics of nursing students, performance of clinical practice and caring character was that the higher level of grade and Scholastic performance, the higher level of score of the Clinical practice performance and the Caring character. The effect on clinical practice performance, the relationship between caring character and clinical practice performance showed that the higher level of score students' caring character, the higher level of score students the clinical practice performance ( $r = .552, p = .000$ ). The results of multiple regression showed that caring character ( $\beta = .010, p = .000$ ) and Scholastic performance ( $\beta = -.065, p = .042$ ) had significant positive effects on clinical practice performance.

**Improvements/Applications:** As a result of this study, it was found that the caring character of nursing students is an important factor to increase the performance of clinical practice.

**Keywords:** Nursing students, Caring character, Clinical practice performance, Caring, Clinical practice

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Caring is a universal phenomenon of human beings that brings life and improves life. It is also essential for human growth, development, survival, and human care for the preservation of all species [1]. Hence, Care in nursing is the essence of nursing behavior and an important element of nursing, the core of nursing education and training [2].

Caring is a nurturing way of engaging with others that makes them feel personally committed and responsible through the practical partnership between nurse and patient [3]. In other words, it is a process of interpersonal

relations through moral communication with the subject, which is represented by the behavior and attitude of the nurse [4].

Clinical practice education for nursing college students is essential to ensure that nursing students perform their roles effectively as professional nurses [5]. Many variables such as interpersonal relationship, emotional intelligence, and communication ability were found to affect the clinical practice performance of nursing students [6, 7].

Lack of clinical performance leads to maladjustment at the clinical site, leading to turnover. Therefore, since the student It is important to improve the clinical performance of nursing students through Clinical Practice Education [8].

Nursing students who have caring character in clinical practice can have a positive influence on their health recovery by feelings of empathy and consideration for the subjects based on human respect. Therefore, in order to successfully carry out clinical practice education, the relationship caring character and clinical practice performance will be identified, and through this, we will use it as the basic data for operating the caring character curriculum and program to enhance clinical practice performance [4].

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study is to investigate the relationship between caring personality and clinical practice performance of nursing students

### **2.1. Subject**

The subjects of this study were a sample of 300 nursing students in 3rd and 4th grade who experienced clinical practice for more than 6 months. The basis for calculating the sample size of the subjects were 166 people, who were calculated as the significance level (alpha).05, power .80, and effect size .15. The sample was enough compare to the minimum number of samples

### **2.2. Tool**

#### **2.2.1. Caring Character**

The caring character measurement tool developed in Kim's research[4], is composed of patient respect, empathy, sincerity, courage, devotion, professional attitude, professional ethics, and identity. The total score for this tool ranges from a minimum of 15 to a maximum of 255. Higher scores mean better caring toughness.

#### **2.2.2. Clinical practice performance**

The clinical practice performance measurement tool was developed by Lee and revised and supplemented by Choi based on Schwirian's The Six Dimension Scale of Nursing. The tool consists of five areas of clinical practice performance: 11 questions of nursing process, 11 questions of nursing skills, 8 questions of education /cooperation, 6 questions of interpersonal relations/communication, and 9 questions of advancement. There are 45 questions in total. Each question is measured on a Likert 5-point scale, ranging from 'not very good' (1 point) to 'very good' (5 points), Higher scores mean higher clinical performance. In Lee's study, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .97 and the reliability Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .94 in this study [9].

### **2.3. Data analysis Method**

The analysis was done using SPSS 23.0win program. The general characteristics, caring character and performance of clinical practice were analyzed by frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation. The difference in caring character and clinical practice performance according to the general characteristics of the subjects was t-test and ANOVA, and the difference in caring

toughness and clinical practice performance was analyzed by correlation. Stepwise multiple regression was used to investigate the effects of caring personality on clinical performance.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General characteristics and clinical practice-related characteristics of this study subject are presented in [Table 1]. The gender of the study subjects was 240 females (80.0%), males were 60 (20.0%). There were 159 third year students (53.0%) and 141 fourth year students (47.0%). There were 116 students (38.7%) with religion and 184 students (61.3%) without religion. Academic scores were highest among 116 (38.7%) above 3.5 ~ 4.0 and below 3.0 ~ 3.5. The mean age was  $22.71 \pm 3.92$ . For clinical practice-related characteristics of this study, 204 people (68.0%) received training from general nurses. For the interpersonal relationship that was difficult during clinical practice, the relationship between clinical nurses was the highest at 171 (57.0%). The ratio of practice performance to observation 3:7 was highest in 228 (76.0%). In the connection between practice and theory, 115 students (38.3%) had theoretical classes before the practice and 178 students (59.3%) took some theoretical classes before practice, in most cases, theoretical lessons were conducted before practice.

**Table 1: Characteristics of the Participants and clinical practice-related characteristics**

characteristic	category	Frequency(N)	Percentage (%)	M±SD
sex	female	240	80.0	-
	male	60	20.0	
grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	159	53.0	-
	4 <sup>th</sup> year	141	47.0	
religion	yes	116	38.7	-
	no	184	61.3	
Scholastic performance	4.0 or higher	34	11.3	-
	3.5 or higher ~ under 4.0	116	38.7	
	3.0 or higher ~ under 3.5	116	38.7	
	Under 3.0	34	11.3	
age		-	-	22.71±3.92
Interpersonal difficulties during clinical practice	Clinical nurse	171	57.0	-
	Patient or guardian	45	15.0	
	peer	28	9.3	
	instructor	14	4.7	

	Other medical personnel	17	5.7	
	other	25	8.3	
Practice instructor	Head nurse	75	25.0	-
	Preceptor nurse	21	7.0	
	General nurse	204	68.0	
Performance and observation ratio in clinical practice	perform: observe=3:7	228	76.0	-
	perform: observe=4:6	37	12.3	
	perform: observe=5:5	21	7.0	
	perform: observe=6:4	4	1.3	
	perform: observe=7:3	10	3.3	
Connection of practice and theory	Theoretical studies before clinical practice	115	38.3	-
	No theoretical studies before clinical practice	7	2.3	
	Partial theoretical studies before clinical practice	178	59.3	

Nursing students' clinical practice performance and caring character are shown in [Table 2]. The average performance of clinical practice was  $3.68 \pm .56$ . Looking at the sub-areas, education/cooperation was the highest with  $3.80 \pm .64$  points, interpersonal relations/communication  $3.75 \pm .70$ , nursing skills  $3.72 \pm .63$ , advancement  $3.70 \pm .62$ , nursing process  $3.68 \pm .61$ . This result shows that it is difficult for nursing college students to apply professional development, nursing skills, and nursing courses in practice. The lowest level of nursing process in the study of Lee [9] and Park [10] was consistent with this study. This is considered to be difficult because the nursing students are not given the opportunity to apply to the nursing process at the nursing clinical field. It is thought that the application and practice of case-centered nursing process are continually applied through the active use and management of clinical field leaders in the practice field, it will affect the improvement of nursing process performance. The caring character of nursing students was  $212.71 \pm 27.53$ . patient respect  $64.08 \pm 8.50$ , empathy  $37.58 \pm 5.20$ , sincerity  $33.75 \pm 4.80$ , courage  $24.10 \pm 3.85$ , devotion  $11.81 \pm 2.37$ , professional attitude  $16.66 \pm 2.64$ , professional ethics  $12.64 \pm 1.90$ , and identity  $12.08 \pm 2.12$ .

**Table 2: Clinical practice competency and Caring character**

subject	Detailed subject	M±SD	
Clinical practice performance	Nursing process	3.68± .61	3.68 ± .56
	Nursing skills	3.72± .63	
	education/cooperation	3.80± .64	
	Interpersonal relations /communication	3.75± .70	
	advancement	3.70± .62	
Caring character (255)	patient respect (75)	64.08±8.50	212.71 ± 27.53
	Empathy (45)	37.58±5.20	
	Sincerity (40)	33.75±4.80	
	Courage (30)	24.10±3.85	
	devotion (15)	11.81±2.37	
	professional attitude (20)	16.66±2.64	
	professional attitude (15)	12.64±1.90	
	Identity (15)	12.08±2.12	

[Table 3] shows the relationship between general characteristics of nursing students, performance of clinical practice and caring character. Among the general characteristics, the higher the grade and the higher S c h o l a s t i c performance resulted in higher Clinical practice performance and Caring character ( $t=3.049$ ,  $p=.002$ ,  $F=.5346$ ,  $p=.001$ ,  $t=-2.752$ ,  $p=.006$ ,  $F=5.300$ ,  $p=.001$ ). There was no difference comparing the other characteristics. This is because the higher grade grants more opportunities for clinical practice. In addition, the h i g h e r the competency of professional knowledge also results in higher the clinical practice performance. Therefore, it i s considered that efforts to improve nursing knowledge are needed to enhance the clinical performance.

**Table 3: The Relationship between General Characteristics of Nursing Students, Clinical practice performance and Caring character**

characteristic	category	Clinical practice performance		Caring character	
		M±SD	t/F(p)	M±SD	t/F(p)
sex	female	3.67±.56	-.512(.609)	213.03±26.94	.398(.691)
	male	3.71±.55		211.45±30.00	
grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	3.59±.57	<b>-3.049(.002)</b>	208.64±29.18	<b>-2.752(.006)</b>
	4 <sup>th</sup> year	3.78±.53		217.31±24.86	
religion	yes	3.64±.57	-.898(.370)	216.25±26.19	1.771(.078)
	no	3.70±.55		210.48±28.19	
Interpersonal difficulties during clinical practice	Clinical nurse	3.69±.56	.792(.556)	212.87±27.65	.800(.550)
	Patient or guardian	3.57±.62		207.42±22.42	
	peer	3.64±.48		214.32±25.71	
	instructor	3.71±.72		209.42±40.26	
	Other medical personnel	3.88±.48		221.88±21.90	
	other	3.68±.47		214.96±32.25	
Scholastic performance	4.0 or higher	3.70±.46	<b>.5346(.001)</b>	209.14±26.62	<b>5.300(.001)</b>
	3.5 or higher ~ under 4.0	3.82±.51		218.56±25.05	
	3.0 or higher ~ under 3.5	3.59±.58		212.16±29.63	
	Under 3.0	3.47±.61		198.23±23.74	

[Table 4] shows the effect on clinical performance. the relationship between caring character and clinical practice performance showed that the higher caring character, higher clinical practice performance ( $r=.552$ ,  $p=.000$ ). In order to examine the effect on clinical practice performance, the results of multiple regression analysis using grade scholastic performance and caring character, which are significantly selected among the general characteristics of subjects as independent variables, are as follows [Table 4]. The results showed that caring character ( $\beta=.010$ ,  $p=.000$ ) and Scholastic performance ( $\beta=-.065$ ,  $p=.042$ ) had significant positive effects on clinical practice performance. Nurses with caring character care for the subject with moral and rational behavior and attitudes, and the Sincerity and empathy of the subject appear to be positively affecting the subject [4]. For this reason, nursing students with caring character are thought to enhance clinical practice performance in Interpersonal relations, communication and cooperation.

**Table 4: Factors affecting clinical practice performance**

variable	$\beta$	t(r)	p
Caring character	.010	9.891(.552)	.000(.000)
Scholastic performance	-.065	-2.042	.042
adjusted R2: .340, F=50.752, p<.05			

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between clinical practice performance and caring personality of nursing students. The subjects of the study were nursing students who had experienced clinical practice for more than 6 months. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 23.0win program and analyzed by stepwise multiple regression to identify the effect on clinical performance.

The results of this study are as follows.

1. Nursing students' clinical practice performance was  $3.68 \pm .56$ . Looking at the sub-areas, education/cooperation was the highest with  $3.80 \pm .64$  points, interpersonal relations/communication  $3.75 \pm .70$ , nursing skills  $3.72 \pm .63$ , advancement  $3.70 \pm .62$ , nursing process  $3.68 \pm .61$ . The caring character of nursing students was  $212.71 \pm 27.53$ . Patient respect  $64.08 \pm 8.50$ , empathy  $37.58 \pm 5.20$ , sincerity  $33.75 \pm 4.80$ , courage  $24.10 \pm 3.85$ , devotion  $11.81 \pm 2.37$ , professional attitude  $16.66 \pm 2.64$ , professional ethics  $12.64 \pm 1.90$ , and identity  $12.08 \pm 2.12$ .

2. The relationship between general characteristics of nursing students, performance of clinical practice and caring character was the higher the grade and scholastic performance resulted in higher the Clinical practice performance and caring character.

3. The effect on clinical practice performance, the relationship between caring character and clinical practice performance showed that the higher the caring character, the higher the clinical practice performance ( $r = .552$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The results of multiple regression showed that caring character ( $\beta = .010$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and Scholastic performance ( $\beta = -.065$ ,  $p = .042$ ) had significant positive effects on clinical practice performance.

As a result of this study, it was found that the caring character of nursing students is an important factor to increase the performance of clinical practice. Therefore, it is meaningful to develop and apply educational methods to improve caring character. Based on these results, it is necessary to develop an education program to improve the caring character of nursing students in order to improve the quality of clinical practice education in the future.

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