

Durga Ranabhat & Bhawani Ranabhat

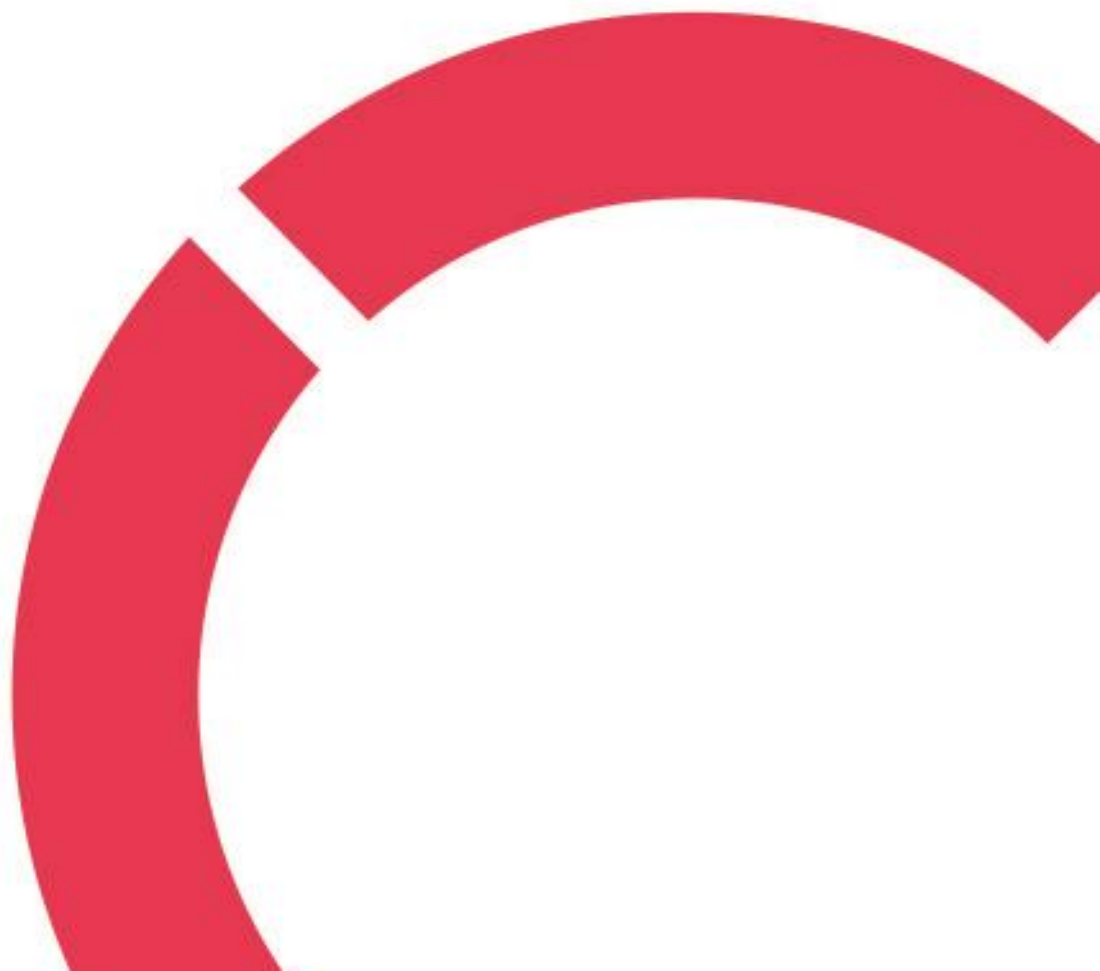
**LEARNING CLINICAL SKILLS AT SCHOOL AND DURING THE FIRST
PRACTICAL PERIOD**

Thesis

CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Bachelor of Health care, Nursing

June 2022



ABSTRACT

Centria University of Applied Sciences	Date June 2022	Author Durga Ranabhat & Bhawani Ranabhat
Degree programme Bachelor of Health care, Nursing		
Name of thesis LEARNING CLINICAL SKILLS AT SCHOOL AND DURING THE FIRST PRACTICAL PERIOD		
Centria supervisor Hanna-Mari Pesonen	Pages 31 + 3	
<p>The main purpose of this thesis is to describe how learning clinical skills at school supports nursing students in their first practice period. Learning clinical skills through theoretical knowledge, workshops and simulations is very important for nursing students to understand clinical skills are a key skill for nursing students.</p> <p>Basic cares, working with ergonomics, measuring vital signs, and basic pharmacological knowledge are the first clinical skills that nursing students should know in their first-year study. These skills are essential to enhance their motivation and develop their competencies in the nursing profession. The thesis also provides important information for the school authority to develop further in the nursing degree program by improving the course materials. The thesis was done with qualitative research method. The open-ended questions were used for data collection. The first-year international nursing students participated in the survey through Webropol and eleven students responded to the questionnaire. The questions focused on the importance of learning clinical skills, methods of learning clinical skills and various clinical skills, which are essential to develop the nursing profession as a career.</p> <p>The results of this research survey are shown in the tables and are briefly explained. The participants pointed out that learning clinical skills through a practical basis has a positive effect on the nursing career by increasing nurses' understanding, promoting effective communication, and developing the nursing competency.</p>		
Keywords Basic clinical skills, International students, Nursing career, Nursing education, and Nursing competency.		

ABSTRACT
CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	3
2.1 Nursing education.....	4
2.2 Nursing competences	6
2.3 Clinical skills in nursing	7
2.4 Learning basic clinical skills and vital signs	9
3 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	10
4 METHODOLOGY.....	11
4.1 Methods used in the research	11
4.2 Data Collection and data analysis	12
5 RESULTS	14
5.1 Learning clinical skills at school support nursing students during their practice period.....	14
5.2 Importance and necessity of learning clinical skills	17
5.3 Different clinical skills that students consider important to learn at school	19
6 DISCUSSION	21
7 ETHICS AND RELIABILITY	23
8 PERSONAL LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.....	24
9 RECOMMENDATION	25
10 CONCLUSIONS.....	26

REFERENCES

APPENDIX

TABLES

TABLE 1. Supports by clinical skills to nursing students	14
TABLE 2. Important and essential of learning clinical skills	17
TABLE 3. Various clinical skills consider important to learn.....	19

1 INTRODUCTION

The nursing profession carries fundamental respect for patients' needs and wishes as well as it supports the form of rigorous core learning. It is full of discipline, profession, and area of practice. Nursing is such a field where discovering, extending, and modifying knowledge for nursing profession happen all the time. It has social responsibility and accountability towards the public. The nurses play a critical role in improving the health sector, disease prevention, improving primary and community care. The nurses provide care in emergency situations and they are the key factor in achieving universal health coverage. Well trained and educated nurses play vital role in achieving quality of health services and health care. (World Health Organization 2017.)

Nursing profession is widely regarded as a noble profession in our society. Samuel (2019) states that to become a qualified nurse, various nursing skills, clinical nursing skills, leadership skills, critical thinking skills, and communication skills are required. These skills allow students to become familiar with nursing skills competency throughout their nursing studies before they enter in nursing environment.

In this thesis the authors will study the nursing student's nursing competencies during their first learning practices at Centria University of Applied Sciences. The nursing competency is a complex integration of knowledge which includes professional judgment skills, values, and attitudes. To achieve nursing competency, the skills and personal traits must be performed effectively including knowledge, techniques, thinking ability, and values. (Fukada 2018.)

The thesis plays an important role in finding various clinical learning skills like basic care hand hygiene and wound care, pharmacotherapy, and eliminations, which are essential in nursing profession. The clinical skills contain various components such as learning how to perform, how to communicate, how to observe, how to analyse, and how to manage in various health situations. Thus, it is important to learn clinical skills at school through simulation and workshops to ensure growth and experience during the study period as well as to become confident and erase the fear of making mistakes. The clinical skills learnt during the studies period before entering in a clinical environment gives the students more information about nursing competence, which helps in performing clinical nursing skills. (Martina 2012.)

The clinical skills and professional development are related to each other. The clinical skills involve active learning in a group and the teachers instruct the students about the uses of various tools and provide sufficient knowledge about the nursing cares, for example; how to measure blood pressure, why and when it is taken. The tools and technologies, communication skills, multi-cultural competency, critical thinking, decision making and patient cares support achieving the nursing goals in nursing field. (Perry 2014.)

Bed making, health hygiene and sanitation, pain treatment and wound care, measuring blood pressure, temperature, saturation, and blood sugar are all examples of basic care. Nursing students must participate in a variety of tasks, including collecting blood samples, medicine management, and distribution. While treating the patients, the nurses must communicate with doctors, patients, and relatives. It aids in the development of positive relationships among patients by allowing them to share their beliefs, values, and respect one another. The health professional working within a multicultural environment, which provides respect to each other as well as help if needed. (Perry 2014.)

Centria University of Applied Sciences, Kokkola offers nursing education in both English and Finnish languages. Nursing is an applied science, that covers a large portion of education on a practical basis. Practical studies are carried out in the form of clinical practices which take place within Finnish healthcare institutions. The completion of the nursing sciences in the bachelor's degree requires 3.5 years with 210 credits. (Centria 2020.)

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The goal of health care professionals' professional duties is to promote and preserve health, prevent sickness, cure those who are sick, and alleviate their suffering. Health care professionals must use commonly recognized, scientifically justified procedures in their professional activities, in accordance with their training, which should be reinforced on a regular basis. Each health care professional must know the advantages of their work against the risks involved. Professionals in the healthcare field must maintain and develop their professional knowledge and abilities, as well as acquaint themselves with the laws and regulations that apply to them. Within health and medical care, there should be cooperation and a suitable environment for health care workers. (Health care professional Act 559/1994 section 5.)

The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health oversees national health care professional advice and oversight. The activities of health care professionals are governed and controlled by the appropriate Regional State Administrative Agency. Under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health directs and supervises the operations of the Regional State Administrative Agencies in order to harmonize their operational principles, procedures, and decision-making practices in the guidance and supervision of health care professionals, as required by Finnish law. (Compliance with regulations and forwarding of information Act 1550/2009 section 19.)

The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health, Valvira deals with medical malpractice and matters relating to the guidance and supervision of health care professionals when it comes to matter that is important to suspicion of medical malpractice. It has resulted in the death of a person or a disability of a person and matters relating to a medicolegal investigation of the cause of death. (Compliance with regulations and forwarding of information Act 1550/2009 section 19.)

The focus of nursing education helps to improve clinical skills, for example, group interaction and necessary clinical decisions in various activities. The role of nurses is becoming more and more complex day to day. The nurses must emphasize on patient-centered care, patient satisfaction, and evidence-based practice. The clinical nursing skills and patient interaction are therefore a primary source of learning, student support, and continuous assessment. These enhance the critical and thinking skills guided by the stimulation of nursing students' cognitive abilities. (Liahana 2005.)

Nursing students should develop an independent, knowledgeable, and safe practices during their practice period. If the nurses who graduate; are not able to think critically or have poor clinical reasoning skills, they often fail to detect impending patient deterioration, including failure to make and act on clinical information. Nurses in general struggle with a lack of support, shortages of nurse educator, complex patient, and work environment issues. They are not able to make high-level decisions independently due to a lack of competence, fear of making mistakes, being criticized by peers while trying to cope in workplace. (Liahana 2005.)

2.1 Nursing education

Nursing education provides nurses with both theoretical and practical training. The goal of nursing education is to make healthcare workers aware of their duties and responsibilities as health professionals and to offer high-quality health care. In the workplace, certified or experienced educational and health professionals use their skills and information. It aids in the orderly and qualified execution of tasks. Clinical nursing activities should be well-planned according to people's interests and engagement. Institutions provide nursing education in various ways in different countries. The purpose of nursing education is to give the best possible health care to patients while adhering to clearly defined duties. The practices and theoretical knowledge which are given by educational institutions help to gain knowledge and experiences in health care services. (Oermann 2008.)

Nursing education gives information and knowledge about the health care services to the health professional and it helps to uplift the health services. Nurses learn how to provide various medicines and treatments to help patients recover from their illnesses. It is beneficial to be alert and self-reliant when providing health care to patients. Nursing education contributes to nursing professionals by providing clear and well-defined nursing skills. (Oermann 2008.)

Nursing is conceptualized as a profession today which attracts the participants in the society. The number of nurses is increasing in Finland and the nurse's responsibility is also increasing day to day. The demand for nursing in Finland has more than one thousand practicing nursing professionals per 100 000 inhabitants, which is like in Sweden and Germany. Yearly a greater number of foreign qualified nurses can immigrate to Finland and start their working life without delay. The shortage of

health workers is still on the horizon so the demand of nursing in Finland is increasing. (Euro statistic 2014.)

From the beginning of 2021, competency standards were employed such as a national test for nurses worth 180 credits. These competency standards were developed in partnership with Edu Pal and Sote Peda 24/7, two leading Ministry of Education and Culture programmes. Professionalism and ethics, client-centred care, communication and multiple professionalisms, health promotion, employee leadership and professional co-operation skills, information technology and documentation, clinical nursing, evidence-based practice, quality management, patient and client safety, service system of health care and social welfare services are some of the competence requirements and contents. (YleSHarvointi 2020.)

In response to the demands of the workplace, education in universities of applied sciences is more practical. Higher education degrees in nursing and health sciences, for example, include bachelor's, master's, and postgraduate degrees at universities. Students can select full-time or part-time study, and each university has its own set of laws and regulations in this regard. The completion of a bachelor's degree in nursing at a UAS takes between 3.5 and 4.5 years. The nursing competence required in nursing are regulated by EU Directive. Clinical health care nursing, geriatric nursing, family health care nursing, development of health, and entrepreneurship are the bases of the nursing curriculum. (Education system in Finland 2018.)

To graduate as a registered nurse, a total of 210 credits are required, which include both theoretical and practical studies. (Education system in Finland 2018.) According to the health care professional act 559/1994, to practice as a registered nurse in Finland, a graduated nurse should have to apply for a license that will permit them to practice the nursing profession. (Valvira 2008.)

UAS was developed in 1991 and the total number of students is around 3000. It offers both bachelor's and master's degrees. The university education in various sectors like business, health care and social sciences, culture, information technology, engineering, environmental chemistry, and technology. Some are taught in the English language too and some subjects are offered only in the Finnish language. (Centria 2020.)

2.2 Nursing competences

The healthcare and health-care-provider systems are evolving these days. In emergency health condition the hospital offers short-term intensive care; once the treatment is over, homecare is offered to care for the patient with dignity and respect until death. As a result, nurses must offer comprehensive care to patients with a wide range of demands. It is critical to develop nursing competency and implement it in day-to-day practice to achieve this. Nursing competence is a skill acquired via education and experience in the profession of nursing. (American Nurses Association 2006.)

Nursing competence is a complex blend of information, skills, attitudes, reasoning abilities, and beliefs. Behaviourism, trait theory, and holism are the three types of nursing competency. Behaviourism refers to the capacity to perform through exhibiting nursing skills, whereas trait theory refers to the individual characteristics required for effective performance, and holism refers to holistic perspectives on competency. Nurses are usually expected to function efficiently in the profession of nursing. They must be able to use their knowledge and skills in a variety of situations and adapt their knowledge and abilities to different situations. Nursing competence is the capacity to conduct actions utilizing a combination of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and experiences. It also entails functioning in a coordinated manner while reflecting on one's emotions, thoughts, and judgment. (American Nurses Association 2006.)

It is an intelligent practical skill including professional judgment, skills, values, and attitude. Thus, nursing competency is very important to establish a foundation for the nursing education curriculum. To measure the nursing competency the seven elements are based on three major components, such as the ability to understand people, the ability to provide people-centred care, and the ability to improve nursing quality. The ability to understand people includes the component of applying knowledge and building an intrapersonal relationship. Similarly, the ability to provide people-centred care consists of providing nursing care, practicing ethically, and collaborating with other professionals. The ability to improve nursing quality includes the elements of expanding the professional capacity and ensuring the delivery of high-quality nursing care. (Fukada 2018.)

Thus, nursing competency is a core ability that is required to become a responsible nurse. Therefore, it is important to include it in nursing education and the nursing students should know that nursing competence is important for continuous professional development.

2.3 Clinical skills in nursing

Clinical skills are a set of professional behaviours, abilities and traits that help nurses in their nursing career. They may contain different domains, for example, physical examination skills, practical procedure, and communication skills. These clinical skills are usually learned in nursing studies. Learning and practicing clinical skills help students to develop their confidence level, which promotes building independence and competence in professional skills in the working environment. These important tasks are done every day in health services and hospitals. (Savonia 2020.)

Clinical skills are mostly used to observe and understand the quality of various services provided in institutions and practical settings. They are attained when the students are given the chance to study and develop their talents at educational institutions. Clinical skills are learned and practiced, which assist students to gain knowledge, independence, and confidentiality in their professional skills. These covers a wide range of nursing skills, including basic care, ergonomics, vital body measurement, pharmacology, and eliminations, among others. These clinical skills are necessary to establish reliability as they lead to professional education. If an issue arises, the nurses should use their expertise to filter the dependability and obtain the facts. While caring for patients, the abilities of punctuality, interpersonal communication, interactions with patients and family, decision-making, and critical thinking should be maintained. (Sudan 2019.)

The health professionals have the clinical skills or competencies in every health sector to provide care and gain experience. The clinical skills and nursing training are parts of nursing training in which trainee nurses contact healthy or sick individuals and communities directly as a member of a team. Management of team and teamwork help to complete any task in a simple way. The nurses should learn not only how to work in a team but how to lead that team along with nursing care in small groups, health institutes, and communities. The clinical training should be carried out in hospitals, communities, and other health care services under the mentoring of nursing teachers, qualified nurses, and other qualified professionals in clinical settings. (WHO Europe 2009.)

Various fundamental care is conducted by the health care staff when caring for the patients. The fundamental skills that health care providers must study and practise at institutions include measuring blood pressure, body temperature, monitoring pulse rate, breathing rate, taking blood glucose, and

level of oxygen. They also practice these skills in real-world settings such as hospitals, clinics, home care facilities, and nursing homes. Nursing competence is the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individuals and community being served. (Royal College of Nursing 2016.)

For practically oriented learning, different clinical skills such as numerous new instruments and technological equipment are employed. They differ depending on the locations where health professionals work. Another aspect of communication is the ability to build a bridge of understanding between patients, family, and health professionals. While doing the nursing work, other skills like decision making, critical thinking, and patient care are emphasized. Competence within a nursing framework addresses the limitation of knowledge, skills, judgement, and interpersonal skills in a changing work environment. (American Nurses Association 2013.)

Nursing students must gain nursing skills and knowledge during their studies, which will be useful in their future careers. Assessment and intervention, communication, critical thinking, and human care and relationship skills are among the nursing talents. These are necessary in nursing jobs to ensure that everyone works together. Monitoring, medical procedures, oral reporting, writing, and computing abilities are all required to reinforce these competencies. (Lenburg 1999.)

The clinical competencies and contents of education include nursing care values, principles and ethical codes, palliative care, pain management, supporting self-care, decision making, quality care management, patients' safety, and confidentiality. The key to ensuring that nurses are competent in their interactions and human care involves knowledge and practice of ethics, as well as abilities such as patient advocacy. The tools and technologies and the documentation of patients report services system of health care and social welfare services are properly and safely handled in nursing professions. (Savonia 2020.)

2.4 Learning basic clinical skills and vital signs

Basic nursing care is the first step that a nursing student should know. Basic cares are the main principle of nursing care including personal care, nutrition plan, pain medication, which are common for achieving patient quality care. The main essential principle of nursing care is basic care which is done in every step of the nursing profession. Basic care is taught and practiced first at any institution and university and the nursing students can perform it in their practical places with their tutors. It includes personal care, hand hygiene, nutrition, wound care, pain, and medication that is vital in meeting patients' quality care. Interaction with the patients and making them relieve from the pain relief are the key steps to be performed. If the patients are fully dependent on the nurses, they must be given priority according to the condition of the patients. (Adamsen & Tewes 2000.)

Centria UAS takes basic nursing skills from the beginning of the study year and arranges various workshops and simulations. The nursing students can achieve knowledge in various ways through teaching methods, simulations and workshops, and practices at various healthcare centres. Centria has its own simulation rooms and workshop room where the students and teachers participate. The nursing students have their own nursing uniform, which need to wear when they are in workshops. In Centria, the workshops and simulations include various clinical skills such as hand hygiene, wound care, first aids, and proper use of gloves including sterile and non-sterile methods. The students and teachers are co-operative with each other for practicing on these matters. (Centria 2020.)

Learning nursing process means to learn a standard of care for patients and create plans of actions to patient's needs. Basic care in nursing is important for nursing students as it prepares the nursing students to advance into more complex learning. Understanding basic care in nursing is important to overall patient well-being. Likewise, measuring vital signs is the first clinical skill that a nurse must do before encounters the patients for the first time. Accurate vital signs are very important to assess the patients' health condition. Vital signs include the measurement of body temperature, pulse, respiration, blood pressure, saturation, blood sugar, and infection rate. Nursing students learn these vital things in their early studies which is crucial to success in the healthcare profession. The vital signs indicate how well the body is functioning. It helps to provide the baseline of patients and evaluate the future treatment planning. This should be followed in documentation to avoid life-threatening outcomes. The vital signs are crucial that the nurses should understand the proper follow-up to determine the patients' responses. (Royal College of nursing 2013.)

3 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this thesis is to describe how learning clinical skills at school support nursing students in their first practice period. The importance of clinical skills in school and during the first practice period is the first step in a nursing career for nursing students.

To provide theoretical knowledge, workshops and simulations about clinical skills such as basic care, ergonomics, vital measurement of the body, and basic pharmacological knowledge are very important for nursing students in their first year of studies because it provides knowledge about understanding clinical skills as a supportive tool for learning nursing care, as well as provides information on clinical skills for nurses and nursing students that improve their clinical skills, enhance their motivation and develop their competences in the nursing profession.

The theoretical knowledge, workshops and simulations give basic ideas for the nursing students about clinical skills during their clinical practice period. The thesis also provides effective information for the school authorities for developing further clinical skills to improve the nursing programme. It will alert and encourage the teachers from the feedback of the nursing students, which will help in proper improvement and management in the nursing field.

The research question for this thesis are:

- 1) How will learning clinical skills through theory, workshops, and simulations at school support nursing students during their practical training period?
- 2) Why is learning clinical skills important and essential during the first year of nursing study?
- 3) What clinical skills students consider important to learn at school during the 1st year?

4 METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the research methods of this thesis. Research means gathering information regarding a particular concern or problem in a specific way. It is a scientific and systematic inquiry for gathering, collecting, and analysing the observed phenomenon to establish conclusion, and make suggestions for future research. It is a movement from the known to the unknown. Research methodology can be done in two ways: qualitative research and quantitative research. It is up to the researcher to choose the methods of the research in their study. The factors that affect the research process are time, research problem, the objective of the research, expected result, primary and secondary data. (Kothari 2004.)

4.1 Methods used in the research

Qualitative research is the exploratory research that collects or analyses non-numerical data to understand the concepts, reasons, opinions, and experiences of individuals. It includes the observation, interview, focus groups, survey, and secondary research on a case study. The observation method means recording what you have seen or heard in an observed field. Similarly, an interview is asking questions to people in one-on-one conversations. Focus groups mean asking questions and discussing among a group of people. The survey is distributing questionnaires based on open-ended questions and the secondary research is collecting existing data in texts, images, and recording forms. The qualitative research is mostly used to gather deep insight of a problem and generate the new findings for research. (Bacon 2016.)

The research approach in this thesis is qualitative research and the process of data gathering is through an open-ended questionnaire. The research questionnaire contains five open-ended questions, and they are sent through Webropol to the students' email and collected the information from them. These all are done in accordance with the rules and regulations written in the Centria guidelines about the thesis writing. The main advantages get from this qualitative research for our thesis are flexibility, natural settings, meaningful insights, and generating new ideas.

4.2 Data Collection and data analysis

The process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established system that enables one to answer stated research questions and evaluate the outcome. Data collection is the systematic process of collecting observations. The method of data collection in this thesis was a questionnaire of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions give the participants the possibility to express their answers in their own words and allow them to express themselves freely. The purpose of data collection was to collect data from the participants on how clinical skills were learnt at school and during the practice period, and why learning clinical skills is important for health care professionals. (Bacon 2016.)

The first-year nursing students participated in this survey. The students were briefed about the task and the questionnaire was conducted using the program Webropol. A brief explanation about the task was included above the questions. An open-ended questionnaire was used which was written in English language and conducted through sending an anonymous Webropol-link to first-year nursing students by email. The questionnaire was resent to get enough responses.

Data analysis is the process of collecting, modeling, and analyzing data from a survey, which is supporting to develop further information and conclusions. It is a logical and statistical technique to describe, illustrate and evaluate the data. The various analytic procedures support drawing inductive inferences from data. (Shamoo & Resnik 2003.) In qualitative research, data analysis starts during data collection and thereafter. Although the process is quite complex and time-consuming it helps to generate data based on participant's perspectives and provide multiple contexts for understanding the phenomenon under study.

For qualitative data analysis in this thesis, the authors used content analysis and the inductive method. Content analysis means describing and categorizing common words, phrases, and ideas in qualitative data. Likewise, an inductive method is generating new information from the data. It is an open-ended and exploratory approach. According to Kananen (2011), when analyzing written material data, the texts were reviewed several times. Then all the answers of responses were studied together to identify some common themes and were interpreted the material in the table. The table was divided into three segments as condensed meaning unit, sub-categories and expression and concept. The sentences, clauses, and paragraphs included in these segments in the table contain important messages collected

from the answers. The segments are clearly explained below the table by figuring out the responses' viewpoint to make sense of the data.

In conclusion, the authors followed some important steps for this qualitative data analysis for our research survey. First, the data were prepared and organized. It means field notes were made. Then, the data were reviewed and explored. The emerged ideas were repeatedly reviewed. Then a data coding system was developed for applying to categorize the data. After this, each participant's responses were followed, tag them with codes, and linked those codes together in a cohesive way.

5 RESULTS

The results reflected the aspects of this thesis purpose, which was based on students' responses to the questionnaire. The results were analysed and then grouped into categories and sub-categories.

5.1 Learning clinical skills at school support nursing students during their practice period

Two questions were asked to get the answer of how learning clinical skills at school supports the nursing students during the practice period. The first-year nursing students responded on how learning clinical skills through theory, workshops, and simulations at school supported them during their practical training period, and the responses were grouped into five sub-categories which were guidelines and confidence, prepare and react, implement, safety in nursing, responsible and professional work (see TABLE 1 below)

TABLE 1. Supports by clinical skills to nursing students

Condensed meaning unit	Sub-categories	Expression and concept
Practical and theoretical learning skills provide proper guidelines, build confidence	Guidelines and confidence	Supports by Learning clinical skills
Help to understand and prepare the students to react in different health situations	Prepare and react	
Know to implement the clinical skills in right place, at right time, with the right patient	Implementation	

Learning clinical skills prepare to use safety in nursing as well as they provide first-year students the basic clinical skills such as caring the patients in their daily routine	Safety in nursing	
Helping to reduce the fear of students in real practice place, make them responsible as well as make the nursing work more effective to achieve the planned goal	Responsible and professional work	

Guidelines and confidence

According to the responses, more than half participants thought that theoretical and practical both learning clinical skills support the nursing students by providing the proper guidelines and building confidence in practical training places. The teaching methods such as simulation, theory learning, and workshops are effective learning methods and help the nursing students to understand better and easier while doing the practices. These methods help the students to learn and understand the nursing work easily, which encourages them to go forward.

Some of the respondents wish that the school organized these types of practice-based learning and simulations more in their curriculum, which will give them good guidelines and develop their level of confidence in the future.

Prepare and React

Some participants thought that theoretical and practical learning clinical skills help the students to understand the different health situations as well as prepare them to react in such situations. Learning clinical skills at school is the cornerstone for nursing students where students can acquire clinical experience. The attention, concentration, efforts, and repetition of skills can be important for developing and maintaining professional skills. Learning clinical skills at school provides the student with a wide range of skills in real practice places. The strength of learning clinical skills at school as

well as integrating students into health care teams and providing role modeling by clinical teachers are highly relevant for future clinical practices in practice places.

Implementation

Also, some participants thought that learning clinical skills is not only about getting the knowledge and skills but also about implementing the clinical skills in the right place at the right time with the right patient. Nurses always provide medical services and also tend to the needy, sick, helpless, and weak patients. Thus, the clinical skills that the nursing students receive at school will give them an idea about the nurses' role in implementation. Examples of some participant's responses, "Simulation helps us know how to implement clinical skills in the nursing field." Particularly, the nurses' task is to understand and implement the right nursing interventions in various life situations.

Safety in nursing

The participants thought that learning clinical skills always provides the skills of using safety in nursing work. Patient safety is an essential nursing aim to prevent errors and patient harm. Patient safety is the main motto of the healthcare system and the best way for improving care. The basic clinical skills such as dealing with patients, feeding them, medication calculation, and working ergonomically can be done safely with an understanding of clinical skills that support the patients and nurses. Some participants mentioned that, "Learning clinical skills help to reduce the fear while dealing with people, how to feed patients, give medications, and work ergonomically." Clinical skills help students to interact with real patients and develop their knowledge.

Responsible and professional work

Almost all the participants include that learning clinical skills at school will help to reduce the fear that they face in real practice place. The responses also include that learning clinical skills makes them to understand professional behavior, which will make their professional work more effective. However, more than half of the responses mentioned that learning clinical skills is very essential for nursing students, which makes the nursing students more responsible as well as professional in their work. Some points of responses are, ‘‘Learning clinical skills at school helped to conquer the fear of dealing with the patients.’’ The participants also mentioned that clinical skills makes nursing students responsible by teaching behavioral manners, and work effectively to achieve the nursing goal in responsible and professional way.

5.2 Importance and necessity of learning clinical skills

The students’ responses regarding the importance and essence of learning clinical skills during their first- year of nursing studies were arranged in three sub-categories such as prepare, familiar and aware, and understand (see TABLE 2 below)

TABLE 2. Importance and necessity of learning clinical skills

Condensed meaning	Sub-categories	Expression and concepts
Prepare for other clinical skills for further studies	Prepare	Importance and necessity of learning clinical skills
Familiar and aware of different health situations so that the action can be done in an effective way	Familiarity and awareness	
Understand the nursing profession as well as grasp the ideas about caring the patients	Understand	

Prepare

The ideas that the students received before they face the real world always prepare them to work further in an effective way. More than half of the students said learning clinical skills at school prepares them for future competence. Some participants state that, “This will prepare you for other clinical skills in your studies.” Learning clinical skills develop and improve practical standards, that further prepare nursing students for creating new skills such as technical and non-technical skills. Some participants also state that, “It prepares the students for future experiences.” Learning clinical skills was based on the principle of see one, do one and teach one. The further knowledge created through transformation of experience.

Familiarity and awareness

Familiar and awareness are the framework for the nursing profession. A nurse should be familiar and aware of the formal descriptions, definitions, and systems of nursing in different health situations so that they can work effectively as well as the patients can get the right treatments. Some participants mentioned that familiar and aware of different health situations give the right vision for other clinical skills in the future. They stated that, “Learning clinical skills provide nursing students to get more familiar and aware of what one would encounter and be conscious of different diseases.” Without basic clinical skills the nursing students will be completely lost in practical places and unable to follow the nursing process at their practical places.

Understand

Developing a professional identity is an essential aspect of every nursing student, therefore the most important aspect of learning clinical skills is to understand the nursing profession so that they can draw a mind map with a convenient viewpoint. According to this concept, some of the participants mentioned learning clinical skills is important to understand everyone’s expectations from the nursing as well as reflect on your practice and develop you as a professional. The participants also stated that, “the nursing students must have a basic understanding of the nursing process to treat the patients.” Learning clinical skills focus on the basic nursing practices, which includes patient safety and health assessments.

5.3 Different clinical skills that student consider important to learn at school

There were two questions to get the answer for what clinical skills student consider important to learn at school during the first-year studies. The participants mentioned various clinical skills that are considered as an important supporting skill in their nursing study.

TABLE 3. Various clinical skills consider important to learn

Condensed meaning	Sub-categories	Expression and concepts
Measuring the vital signs such as temperature, blood pressure, blood sugar, saturation, CPR, INR	Vital signs	Various clinical skills consider important to learn
Personal hygiene, bed making, feeding, interaction with patients	Daily activities	
Ergonomically working, basic skills with drug calculation and distribution	Ergonomics and drug calculation	
Skills of consulting with a co-worker and working as a team	Teamwork	

Vital signs

Measuring vital signs is the core component in taking care of a patient's health. Vital signs help to evaluate the general physical health of patients, provide clues about possible diseases, and help nurses to monitor the patient's health status. Almost every participant mentioned that measuring temperature, blood pressure, and caring for pain are some basic clinical skills that a nursing student should learn.

For example: How to measure temperature, blood pressure, personal hygiene, and wound care are basic clinical nursing practices that the nursing student should do in their first clinical practice.

Daily activities

Besides the vital signs, the nurse should have the knowledge about day-to-day activities of the patients. For example, feeding, making bed, mobility, and communicating with the patients. These activities should be practiced while learning clinical skills so that the nursing students are able to practice the assessment process to identify the patient's capacity to do their daily activities, for example besides vital signs, some basic daily activities such as bed making, communication, wound care, and first aid should include in clinical skills.

Ergonomics and drug calculation

Some students said that ergonomics and drug calculation must be included in learning clinical skills. They said ergonomics is the practice of working nursing tasks for adopting the nursing environment and preventing injuries. They also mentioned that the students should demonstrate their knowledge of drug calculations as part of their practice. For example, "Other clinical skills such as drug calculation, how to work ergonomically, should include in learning clinical skills." Using these skills, the nursing students can able to guide the helpful information with safety administering a medication to a patient.

Teamwork

According to the participants, there should be always communication and coordination practices with different health workers. The nurses should be encouraged to develop skills such as asking questions, sharing ideas, or concerns, and discussing potential solutions in a team. The participants mentioned that effective teamwork is an essential clinical skill for constructing an effective and patient-centred health care delivery system.

6 DISCUSSION

From the study findings, the first-year nursing student's perception of learning clinical skills at school during their first training practice period, its importance and essentiality in the nursing field, and different clinical skills that students considered important to learn at school were conveyed. All the participants assessed that learning clinical skills at school was more useful to boost their nursing skills in practice training period and in future working life. The participants expressed the positive attitude that through the clinical skills they get the support in developing their nursing skills even more.

The students said that nursing is a practice-based profession therefore, learning clinical skills is essential in nursing studies. The quality of education and experiences achieved in nursing professional always help nurses evaluate their own skills and enhance their competencies. Learning clinical skills at school provides the opportunity for students to develop their skills and problem-solving abilities. The respondents said it is important that the nursing students should get the clinical environment to practice the things based on theoretical content. This is reflected by Kilpeläinen (2010), who said practicing clinical skills supports to develop the skills even more effectively and fruitfully.

Preparing for other clinical skills as well as responsibility and professional skills can be developed in future working life which was reflected by McGovern (2006), who pointed out that a nurse needs hard work with practical base ability and effective communication skills with teamwork and good leadership skills. Thus, the practical base clinical skills help to build responsibility and confidence in nursing students, which can be more fruitful for them in future working life. The nursing students also expressed the feeling of fear while entering in the clinical practice. Because of such fear, the nursing students are not able to do a good performance in the clinical setting. It is also seen that students who are good in theory, can face struggles in clinical practice. Thus, the rich simulation learning environment helps them to transfer their theoretical knowledge into the clinical setting.

Likewise, the nursing competence includes all the core abilities to make the nurses responsible and fulfilled their role as a nurse. Thus, the nursing competence is very important to develop as a foundation for nursing education curriculum to improve the nursing quality. Every day the nurses have challenges on how to provide support for treating the patient with dignity and respect in the society as professionals. They are expected to take nursing responsibilities for continuously providing better nursing care support and it also protect activities for daily living. To accomplish this, the nurses must

improve their nursing competency and implement it in daily practices. According to some participants, nursing competence is an ability that can be achieved through experiences and learning. Certain circumstances and motivation needed to show one's potential abilities as well as behavioural abilities are based on a person's interests and experiences. This view is reflected by Fukada (2018), who stated that nursing competence is divided into three theories: behaviourism, trait theory, and holism.

Behaviourism means such nursing competency where one can be able to perform his/her individual core skills to improve their nursing competency and utilize it in their daily practice. Likewise, the trait theory consists of the nursing competencies such as knowledge and critical thinking skills to perform the nursing work effectively. The holism competency includes knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and thinking capacity that are required in every nursing situation. The nursing competency is a complex integration of knowledge that includes professional judgement, skills, values, attitudes. In each situation, the nurses must apply their knowledge, skills, and individual traits to achieve the best nursing competency. (Fukada 2018.)

Some students said that they wanted to practise clinical skills more in a practical way. They included basic nursing care, measuring vital signs, ergonomics, and basic pharmacotherapy are important clinical skills that consider to be learnt at school. Ali Mir (2020) stated that nurses play important role in health sector by providing the patients physical and emotional care. Therefore, a nurse requires the relevant knowledge and skills. As a nurse, the clinical skills should be learnt and developed based on basic care, communication skills, professional remain, ability to adapt, teamwork, ability to understand the situation and being confident and strong. Likewise, Rennie (2009) in his article states that clinical skills learning needs grounded in experience, exposure, and encouragement. In nursing education, the students need to perform the information that they receive in their classroom so that they can apply that knowledge in the real clinical areas. The clinical skills learnt through practical way is more effective and supportive for nursing students.

7 ETHICS AND RELIABILITY

Informed consent is one of the most important ethical problems to consider while doing research. Participants in the study always provide their permission intentionally, willingly, thoughtfully, and openly. The researchers' conduct of scientific and other research in research institutes is governed by research ethics. The basic goal of research ethics is to follow the rules and regulations to protect the confidentiality of data and information. (Doyle & Buckley 2014.)

The ethical considerations in this thesis will follow the guide from the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity. The integrity, meticulousness, and accuracy will be considered while conducting the research. The questionnaires, data collection, and analysing data will be confirmed in scientific criteria and ethically sustainable. (Johnson & Long 2017.) The thesis will be published according to the instructions of Centria. The confidential material is not included in the thesis and the thesis will be made public immediately after approval. While publishing the results, the results are communicated openly and responsibly.

The thesis follows all the important ethical issues such as, general ethical principles of research, responsible conduct of research, ethical recommendations for thesis writing at the university of applied sciences, ethical principles of research with human participants, applying for the research permit from Centria, concluding a thesis agreement. The research permit applied to the organization in the initial stages of the thesis work. All the nursing students who participated were informed about the purpose of the study, the principles of voluntary participation and anonymity, and the informed consent was obtained. (Doyle & Buckley 2014.)

The reliability also can be secured by focusing on data collection and data analysis. The data was collected carefully and analysed accurately. The data and the results presented in the thesis represent the information that the participants had provided. The interpretation of the data reflects the participants' opinions. (Doyle & Buckley, 2014.) The data was collected in a secure way through email using Webropol program. The participants' names and email addresses did not appear while collecting the data. Questionnaires in English language were sent to the first-year nursing students by email. The results were analysed by the qualitative method. The thesis was based on ethical principles of anonymity and confidentiality, inappropriate use, privacy, dignity, autonomy, and justice. (Johnson & Long 2017.)

8 PERSONAL LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The authors wrote the theoretical part and then were prepared for the research survey. The authors used some books from the library and websites on the internet to write the theory. The authors did time to time discussions with the thesis supervisor through the Microsoft Team and sometimes the authors met at Centria for the correction of writing. She gave us comments and feedback which helped to re-correct the writing in time.

While collecting data and information from the nursing students of Centria University of Applied Sciences, we used Webropol as a research survey tool. First, we made 5 research survey questions based on our 3 main survey questions. They are related to our goal and objectives of our thesis writing and the supervisor helped us a lot while making a good research question. We sent a permission letter to Centria for taking survey research from nursing students and soon we got a positive response to start our survey. Then we sent the questions to the nursing students for 2 weeks and got the few responses. To get more answers we sent those questions again to students through email. The responses were very late to come which lengthened the time to complete our thesis.

We had faced both positive and negative experiences while writing the thesis and collecting the data and information. The group work was very good and arranging the suitable time was beneficial while working. It was easy to do the thesis in pairs which helped to complete the work fast and mistakes were easily noticed and corrected immediately. The supervisor teacher and Centria were very helpful and supportive which made us comfortable to work. On the other side, Webropol was a new tool for us to use and at the beginning, it was difficult to use. But the supervisor helped us to use and how to send the survey questions to the students and how to observe the responses.

We achieved more knowledge by doing this thesis, we got both theoretical and practical based experiences. We learned more about the clinical skills in the nursing field like how to care the patients, communication, and interaction. The working environment and good teamwork always help nurses to develop their clinical skills while working as an independent nurse. The nursing students always learn various skills from schools and practical places. The various workshops and simulations help to learn and understand nursing clinical skills. While writing the thesis our teamwork, the supervisor and language teachers' guides and valuable time and the school's support play vital role to complete the thesis.

9 RECOMMENDATION

This study aimed to describe how learning clinical skills help nursing students in their nursing career. The study also provides useful information to the school authorities to improve the nursing programme by developing the courses related to nursing guidelines, which develop the motivation and enthusiasm of nursing students in future.

The research that has been undertaken for this thesis is a qualitative approach with questionnaire method using open-ended questions. The study has provided insights on the students' opinions about learning clinical skills at school and during their practice period. While gathering the finding from the study research, the authors have found the recommendation from the nursing students to the school authority to improve the nursing field as a professional career.

According to the nursing students, the study methods like workshops and simulations are the best tools to understand the clinical skills in an effective way. It helps them to communicate and disseminate the knowledge from one student to another. The nursing students want more workshops and simulation practice-based study at school, which makes easy to understand clinical skills than teaching theory in classes. For example, in the simulations, the students play a role as a nurse, patient and relatives which will help to experience the real situation and find out the important causes and problems of the patients' illnesses and help to decide on the right way for right treatment. It helps to keep trustful relationships among the nurses, patients, and relatives.

Thus, we recommend the school authorities to focus or develop more practical- based plans that are aligned with targeted goals, outcomes, and performance measures. Besides this, hearing the story of other experiences related to nursing works motivates nursing students in the nursing field. The nursing students can be able to change their views and working process having their own experiences and from listening others' experiences in related field, therefore we would recommend the school authority to organize the introduction of seminars with working nurses as well as graduated nurses of Centria to talk with nursing students who just start their nursing programme to encourage and motivate them in working life.

10 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the learning clinical skills for nursing give the nursing students the most important nursing skills on communications, clinical practical skills, clinical decision- making skills, empathy, and professionalism as an integrated whole. This will help the nursing students to get familiar with a standardised skills competency before they enter in the nursing environment. The nursing students play an important role in nursing professional field in the future. Due to a smaller number of students joining in the nursing study it is very important to develop nursing field that influences more students to join the nursing education and motivates them in future.

The study shows that majority of the students are influenced and motivated through the practical study to learn clinical skills. The practical knowledge is more effective and fruitful for nursing professionals. The participants expressed that learning clinical skills helps to get professional thinking, behaviour, attitudes, and awareness of clinical skills before entering in the nursing practices. Most of the students figured out that learning clinical skills through theoretical and practice base is very important for each nursing student to gain knowledge and information about basic clinical nursing skills.

It is also essential for all nursing students, teachers, and groups to learn clinical skills through group work-study, practices, workshops, and simulation, which create a good environment to learn. The group study and practical study help to exchange ideas between students and help to generate the new ideas. The basic clinical skills like hand hygiene and sanitation, wound cares, and bandaging are learnt through group work in workshops and simulation at school.

Similarly, the school authority should develop plans for improving the nursing programme by improving the courses as well as including more essential clinical skills in practical base learning to guide the students on right path with influence motivation, enthusiasm, and retain them in their nursing career. The evaluation of students' opinions on learning clinical skills and providing them practical based skills to develop their confidence level in the working environment is essential.

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Open-ended research survey questions

Please give the appropriate responses to the following questions.

1. What clinical skills are necessary to learn at school before the first clinical practice and why?

2. What teaching methods (theory teaching, simulations, and workshops) promoted your learning of clinical skills and why?

3. How learning clinical skills at school prepared you for a first clinical practice?

4. What else would you want to include in learning clinical skills at school to improve your clinical competence?

5. Why do you think learning clinical studies is important during the first year of study?

