

Foreign first-year nursing students' experiences during their first clinical practice

An Interview Study

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Abstract/Summary

Clinical nursing practice has long been seen as an integral element of a student nurse's education. It allows them to implement the theories they have studied and begin preparing themselves with clinical skills, knowledge, and various rich humanistic experiences. The study aims to explore the different experiences of foreign first-year nursing students during their first clinical practice.

The researcher conducted a qualitative approach using a semi-structured interview to obtain the student's opinions or thoughts and experiences during their first clinical placement. Five (5) foreign first-year nursing students at Novia University of Applied Science were selected using purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis.

The analysis described four (4) themes relating to foreign first-year nursing student experiences during their first clinical practice; *Challenging experiences*, *Coping strategies*, *Well-experienced practice*, and *Nursing students as nurses*.

The research concludes that the overall experience of these foreign first-year nursing students was generally positive. Although these students had experienced some difficulties during their clinical placement, they viewed every challenge as a learning experience to be better communicators and health workers. The integration program for foreign nursing students must be continued or improved since communication is very important in the nursing field in which these students are having difficulty with most of their experiences.

Language: English

Keywords: International nursing student, first-year nursing student, first clinical experience, first clinical placement.

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1 Introduction

Clinical nursing practice has traditionally been considered an essential part of student nurses' learning because it allows them to implement the theories they have studied and begin preparing themselves with clinical skills, knowledge, and a load of various rich humanistic experiences (Astin, Newton, McKenna, & Moore-Coulson, 2005). However, the clinical environment exposes first-year nursing students to problems that are not present in the classroom setting, causing students to feel a great deal of confusion and fear. (Kol & Ince, 2018).

The first clinical nursing practice or clinical training is one of the important aspects of learning as part of nursing education. Students will be able to work hand in hand with real nurse's work life to provide quality care to their patients. The clinical learning setting provides several possibilities for student learning and the development of important nursing abilities. As these foreign first-year nursing students will undergo clinical training or clinical practice, they could face numerous challenges and anxiety-problem because of different cultural backgrounds including language and things could lead to pursuing or unwillingly pursuing their profession after their first clinical practice (Matshotyana, Rooyen, & Du Rand, 2015). Previous research has found that healthcare students from various cultural and linguistic origins encounter significant problems in clinical learning environments and mentorship (Mikkonen, Elo, Kuivila, Tuomikoski, & Kääriäinen, 2016). According to Mattila, Pitkäljärvi, and Eriksson (2010), some issues occur regarding cultural background, discrimination, and racism. Specifically, this expressed itself in isolating foreign nursing students from their surroundings. The students' needs were not being met, there was no rapport between students and supervisors, and students were not given clear objectives for their working environment (Mattila, Pitkäljärvi, & Eriksson, 2010).

This research study aims to explore the different experiences of 5 foreign first-year nursing students of the Novia University of Applied Science who had their first clinical placement by conducting a semi-structured interview. In addition to this study, it can be used for the new batch of foreign first-year nursing students to provide information and prepare themselves for their first clinical practice.

2 Background

In Finland, a shortage of 30,000 nurses is expected over the next decade, well beyond what can be supplied by recruiting just from the local population. In a country like Finland, where the population is expected to age at a record rate by 2030 and the impending retirement of 13,000 nurses might exacerbate an already dire caregiving crisis (Smith, 2021). According to Smith of Helsinki Times (2021), because of Finland's need for nurses the 3.5 years Nursing Degree Programme was developed. The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Employment and Economy have been allocated to the "TOKASA Project's Nursing Degree Programme", which aims to increase the number of foreign-born professionals working in Finland (Smith, 2021).

Nursing students who are enrolled in the different University of Applied Science in Finland must complete a total of 210 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) that consist of theoretical studies 105 ECTS, practice 90 ECTS, and, thesis 15 ECTS that will last approximately three and a half years to complete. The language of instruction during clinical rotations required for this course will be Finnish or Swedish. (Novia UAS, n.d.).

In this chapter, Clinical practice and other experiences of foreign nursing students will be discussed further.

2.1 Clinical practice

Clinical nursing practice has traditionally been considered an integral part of student nurses' education because it allows them to apply the concept they have studied and prepare themselves with clinical skills, knowledge, and a load of various rich humanistic experiences (Astin, Newton, McKenna, & Moore-Coulson, 2005). The transformation of a novice student into an experienced and capable caregiver is one of the primary advantages of clinical education, which is an integral component of the educational program for health sciences (Yazdankhahfard, Ravanipour, & Mirzaei, 2020). Students have the chance to translate their theoretical knowledge into the many psychological, mental, and physical abilities that are important for providing patient care when they participate in clinical training (Yazdankhahfard, Ravanipour, & Mirzaei, 2020).

Clinical education, in contrast to classroom education, takes place in a highly complicated social setting (Yazdankhahfard, Ravanipour, & Mirzaei, 2020). The clinical training that nursing students get takes place in a clinical setting, which is a dynamic and complicated

educational environment. This training has a significant impact on the students' future careers as registered nurses (Ordu, 2021).

The first year of clinical practice could be the first chance to encourage students to pursue other meanings and goals in life, gain new information, and build new ideas, particularly about nursing life in Finland (Jonsén, Melender, & Hilli, 2012). It may also aid students in developing qualities like compassion, clinical proficiency, security, and effective communication.

2.2 Clinical environment and settings

According to Yazdankhahfard, Ravanipour, and Mirzaei (2020), when it comes to prepping student nurses for their professional roles, the clinical setting is an asset that cannot be replicated and is necessary. Because of this, the setting in which students complete their practical training is a critical component of the student's overall educational experience. The clinical learning environment is subject to various changes; yet, despite these changes, the clinical environment continues to play an essential role in nurse education. (Yazdankhahfard, Ravanipour, & Mirzaei, 2020)

Nursing students are assessed in clinical learning environments where they can apply their skills and knowledge to patient care. These settings influence their preparedness, learning outcomes, as well as student improvement in the nursing profession (Flott & Linden, 2016). Many first-year nursing students begin clinical practice in clinical environments with great expectations. They wish to learn about the practical application of nursing theory, as well as all of the required skills, performance routines, and reflection abilities (Jonsén, Melender, & Hilli, 2012).

Although there are numerous benefits associated with working in a clinical setting, this kind of atmosphere may also be stressful, unexpected, and challenging for students. The clinical environment can be stressful for several reasons, including a lack of clinical experience, difficulty in adapting to the clinical setting, challenging patients, the possibility of making errors, the fear of causing injury to the client, and the fear of being judged by the supervisor. There were also instances of communication problems with patient relatives, and nursing staff. In the first year of nursing school, students often find themselves in stressful circumstances like these which are not present in a classroom setting or school (Ordu, 2021). Anxiety and worry about possible peer criticism, afraid of making an error, inadequate knowledge of practical skills and procedures, having a conversation with nursing staff and

patients, going to approach critically ill patients, and clinical nurses' negative attitudes and expectations are among the concerns (Kol & Ince, 2018)

2.3 Supervision and mentorship

There has been a lot of talk about the function of the mentor, and there is a growing amount of empirical data to support the significance of the role that it plays in students' experiences of practice learning (McIntosh, Gidman, & Smith, 2014). According to Mattila, Pitkäljärvi, and Erickson (2010) supervision of students' clinical settings can be done in a variety of ways. It always includes clinical personnel and university instructor with their own set of functions and obligations. Most or all of the time, students work in pairs with nurses who serve as clinical instructors and supervise students' progress or performance. Supervisors and nursing staff must teach and create a learning environment that is beneficial to student learning. These individuals have both the ability and the obligation to make this happen (Matshotyana, Rooyen, & Du Rand, 2015).

The function of the faculty member varies, but it always entails acting as a liaison between the institution and the clinical practice placement, as well as a support person for the clinical instructor and a facilitator of learning for students. (McIntosh, Gidman, & Smith, 2014)

The positive experiences of students always start with a good orientation with the clinical instructors. Accepting students as members of the team, as well as granting them autonomy in the care they provide to patients and exposing them to challenges that help them develop into better healthcare workers, including a sense of self-awareness and empowerment. (Mattila, Pitkäljärvi, & Eriksson, 2010). As a result of these encounters, students perceive themselves as complete members of the healthcare provider community as well as of society as a whole. Support from an instructor and a nurse in this process is an important part of learning for first-year students because it develops trust, instills a feeling of belonging, and guarantees the most optimal learning among students (Kol & Ince, 2018)

2.4 Experiences concerning different cultures

Clinical supervision during the first clinical placement may be both a positive and negative experience for foreign nursing students (Jonsén, Melender, & Hilli, 2012). According to Korhonen et al. (2019), some students felt that clinical personnel handled both native and ethnically and linguistically diverse students fairly. Unfortunately, several students were subjected to mistreatment by clinical staff, which they claimed to be their cultural

background. Mistreatment manifested itself as mentors' lack of attentiveness, mentors' unpleasant attitude, and mentors' arrogance toward the students' foreign background (Korhonen, et al., 2019). Sometimes, students felt unwelcome at their placement because of the staff members' lack of orientation and excessive rush. Students in unappreciative learning environments were not allowed to participate in meaningful learning experiences and were instead delegated to low-level activities (Korhonen, et al., 2019). Furthermore, in such situations, students either ended up choosing to withdraw and remain in the placement to earn the credits, or they persevered in attempting to improve contact with the nursing staff and patients (Mattila, Pitkäljärvi, & Eriksson, 2010).

2.5 Other studies regarding foreign nursing students

According to Matilla, Pitkäljärvi, and Eriksson (2010), the results of their study corroborated those of other research showing that a language barrier, in particular, increases students' risk of detachment and compromises learning outcomes in clinical practice. Students' inability to communicate in Finnish sometimes results in frustrating situations. Students believed that their poor usage of Finnish prompted some of the nurses to get angry. For some of the students, speaking in English is strictly forbidden. Due to the absence of a common language, the students were confused about how to participate in the various nursing activities. Students were hesitant to discuss their worst encounters with clinical professors or lecturers. Recognizing that students have the desire to keep such experiences secret might help in creating a more welcoming clinical learning environment. The development of cultural sensitivity and competency should be a central emphasis of nursing and teacher training programs. (Mattila, Pitkäljärvi, & Eriksson, 2010)

According to Edgecombe, Jennings, and Bowden (2013), the modernization of the view of foreign students from a burden to an advantage is the key to resolving the problems that have been raised in research and are debated. A search of the published nursing literature for studies pertaining to the clinical learning experiences of foreign nursing students was carried out. The key is to stop seeing foreign students as a competitor and start viewing them as a resource that has to be recognized and worked with, and this is especially important when it comes to foreign nursing students in clinical settings or the nursing profession. (Edgecombe, Jennings, & Bowden, 2013)

According to Mikkonen et al. (2016), students' level of language proficiency was a key component that determined their performance in clinical assignments, and it was proven to

be a predictor of how well they were received in a different culture. Integration programs need to be developed for foreign students so that they may advance their knowledge of the foreign language, practice their language abilities, and acquire cultural components of communication that are pertinent to the country in which they are studying. In addition, they propose that more research be conducted to evaluate the effects of language education interventions for international students both before and after they participate in clinical placements. This will allow mentors in determining the extent to which these interventions have an impact on the degree program curricula for nursing studies. (Mikkonen, Elo, Kuivila, Tuomikoski, & Kääriäinen , 2016)

3 Aim and Research Question

This research aims to explore the different experiences of foreign first-year nursing students during their first clinical practice. This will also give insight to other foreign nursing students, teachers, and nurses in bringing together sets of information that are required to provide favorable experiences in clinical practice.

The research question:

1. What are the lived experiences of a foreign first-year nursing student during their first clinical exposure?

4 Theoretical Framework

According to Benner, Hughes, and Sutphen (2008), learning to deliver safe and high-quality healthcare needs technical knowledge, critical thinking skills, clinical decision-making, and expertise. In guiding this research process, Patricia Benner's Theory of "From Novice to Expert" was selected. This model was developed from the Dreyfus Model of Skills Acquisition to give a more objective approach to evaluating nursing abilities and student growth. Benner's Novice to Expert Theory provides a methodical approach to understanding how a learner, such as a student, a novice nurse, or an experienced nurse, increases their abilities and their comprehension of a practice circumstance or event throughout the course of their career.

Table 1. Level of nurse's experience. (Benner, Hughes, & Sutphen , 2008)

Stages	Description
Novice	No professional experience or no background experience.
Beginner	demonstrates appropriate competence and has prior experience in actual nursing scenarios
Competent	A nurse often has two or three years of experience in the same sector.
Proficient	The learner performs by utilizing pieces of evidence that give guidelines for viewing a scenario as a whole.
Expert	Nurses can no longer link circumstances and choose actions based on principles, norms, or standards.

Benner's described "novice" has no background or prior familiarity with the circumstance that is currently taking place. They are instructed on general ideas that will assist them in completing tasks, but their behavior, which is limited by rules, is restricted and rigid. In other words, the students are told what to do, and they only need to obey in order to complete an easily applied assignment (Benner, Hughes, & Sutphen , 2008).

As the novice acquires understanding and knowledge about the task, an individual advances to the beginner stage. An individual is considered to be at the beginner level when they have both the requisite competency and experience working in genuine nursing circumstances (Brykczynski, 2018). Although the individual may have some clinical expertise, the focus is on the rules and principles that have been taught (Davis & Maisano, 2016). This is the primary challenge that beginners encounter. The advanced novice needs aid and support in the clinical context, namely in the determination of priorities to ensure that vital patient requirements are not neglected (Benner, Hughes, & Sutphen , 2008).

The competent stage is the third step in the progression from beginner to expert in the model. A capable nurse or nurse supervisor is able to organize the work at hand by drawing on experiences from the nurse's or manager's past. Competent people plan their task in advance to ensure that it goes smoothly and quickly. A competent leader is one who, although lacking the multitasking skills and adaptability of the skilled leader, is yet capable of deliberate planning utilizing conceptual and analytic ideas that prioritize long-term objectives (Davis & Maisano, 2016).

The proficient level is reached as the competent person continues to develop. Since the person now has a comprehensive picture of the circumstance, he or she can make sound decisions based on generalized maxims (Brykczynski, 2018). The evidence of maxims can point the way to what matters most in a certain circumstance. The competent nurse or administrator can make better decisions because of their comprehensive awareness of the problem (Davis & Maisano, 2016).

The expert individual has an extensive knowledge of situations that allows for confidence and an intuitive grasp of complex patient situations. When an individual has reached the expert stage, they no longer rely on rules, guidelines, or maxims since they are able to comprehend the circumstances and know what must be done at this moment. (Davis & Maisano, 2016)

Benner's "novice to expert" theory has had a considerable influence on practices throughout the healthcare industry. As a person advances through the various stages of the model, they have the opportunity to acquire new skills and expand their knowledge base (Davis & Maisano, 2016). In addition, the model highlights significant instructional approaches appropriate for each step of the model. An advanced beginning is a good example of someone who might benefit from having a mentor since they still require assistance in establishing priorities and determining what aspects of their work are the most vital (Benner, Hughes, & Sutphen , 2008).

5 Methodology

Nursing research is a systematic investigation aiming to generate reliable data regarding problems that are important to the nursing profession, such as nursing practice, administration, education, and informatics (Pilot & Beck, 2010). The primary research method for this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is collecting and analyzing data in a non-numeric form, it is a narrative description (Pilot & Beck, 2021). The qualitative technique is used to comprehend people's views, experiences, interactions, attitudes, and behavior as a humanistic or idealistic approach, and it focuses on understanding a research inquiry. (Pilot & Beck, 2021)

5.1 Pilot Study

To determine the weakness and to obtain initial data for the research study, a pilot study was conducted on a first-year foreign nursing student who already validated the first clinical practice, since the participant is a practical nurse in an Elderly care in Finland. The setting was on teams and was recorded for the whole interview.

A pilot study is a short study designed to test the viability or the effectiveness of the research procedure, data collecting tools (whether online or face-to-face interview), sample recruitment tactics or what are the different techniques to be used during the actual interview, and other research methodologies in advance of a larger study (Abu Hassan, Schattner, & Mazza, 2006). In addition, a pilot study is utilized in this research in order to improve the flow of the dialogues through the development of facilitation skills throughout the process of conducting interviews.

5.2 Sampling

The researcher used purposive sampling in this study to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of interest and ensure credibility. Purposive sampling is a non-probability technique that relies on the own judgment of the researcher when choosing a participant. In this method, all respondents to an interview are chosen based on whether or not they match a certain criteria. (Pilot & Beck, 2021)

The chosen participants of this study were Five (5) foreign first-year nursing students at the Novia University of Applied Science who were enrolled in clinical nursing subjects during the second semester of 2021–2022. These participants had their first clinical practice recently (May 2022) in an elderly home in Vaasa City. In order to portray the diversity of foreign nursing students, the researcher conducted an interview with different nationalities (See Table 2.). The participants were sent an informed consent through electronic mail and were given an amount of time to review it (See Appendix 2.). Once they agreed to the terms and conditions of the study and interview process, the researcher and the participants scheduled an interview via Teams, Webex, or one-on-one interview in person.

Table 2: Information of the participants.

Participants	Gender	Age	Nationality	Relationship	Primary language used	The language used (Practice)
Participant #1	Male	31	Filipino	Single	English	Swedish
Participant #2	Female	40	Nigerian	Married	English	Swedish
Participant #3	Female	26	---	Married	English	Finnish
Participant #4	Female	19	Nepali	Single	English	Swedish
Participant #5	Male	27	Ghana	Single	English	Finnish

5.3 Data Collection

Upon the completion of their first clinical practice, 5 first-year foreign nursing students at Novia were invited to participate in the research. The data is collected through a Semi-structured interview. Semi-structured were used in this study to enable the researcher to obtain open-ended information, investigate participating members' ideas, feelings, and opinions about a certain issue, and dig thoroughly into personal and often sensitive problems (Pilot & Beck, 2021).

3 participants were interviewed on Teams and 2 participants in a one-on-one interview at the cafeteria during their free time. The interview lasted for 20-45 minutes, which is enough time to gather appropriate data from the participants. The first question asked was "Tell me about yourself" followed by "How will you describe your experience in your first clinical placement? Can you tell me more about it?" (See Appendix 2). To verify that interview data represent the actual verbatim responses of participants, qualitative interviews were videotaped and audio-recorded using a personal cellphone and recording settings on Teams.

5.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed to explore the different experiences of the foreign first-year student using thematic content analysis. Thematic analysis is a technique for methodically detecting, organizing, and providing insight into patterns of meaning (themes) in a data set (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

A complete recording of the interview was collected to be able to analyze data from the interviews (Gerrish & Lathlean, 2015) and transcribed to obtain full information.

Transcribing was accomplished by listening to the conversation numerous times using an audio and video recording, then putting it into Microsoft Office Word. Afterward, all the transcript data was coded and extracting them to different categories and sub-categories. These categories were then methodically reduced into themes and sub-themes in order to be clear, helpful, and reliable.

6 Ethical Consideration

The most important ethical considerations to address while organizing and performing research include respecting participants, responding to the needs of vulnerable persons and groups, obtaining consent, and ensuring confidentiality (Gerrish & Lathlean, 2015). The participants' trust in researchers is the essential starting point for a study involving human participants. To prevent inflicting unwarranted harm to the participants and the communities they represent, researchers must get familiarized with the group they are researching, as well as its culture and history, ahead of time (Tenk, 2019).

In doing the study or the interview with the participants, informed consent from the university is not necessary since the interview was conducted after the participant's class and will not be intervening in their studies in Novia.

All participants were provided an informed consent through email or letter that includes the aim or the purpose of the study, the research question that will be further discussed during the interview, and the benefit of the study. Students were notified of the study's privacy and anonymity, that their participation was fully voluntary, and that they may withdraw at any time throughout the study (Tenk, 2019).

Throughout the interview, their right to confidentiality and anonymity was respected; no personally identifiable information about the participants was included in the research paper. The researcher also knows that participants' identities and private details would not be disclosed to a third party without their agreement (Tenk, 2019). All participants were assured that the data that the researcher collected will be stored in a safe place and appropriately transcribe the data. Participants were also informed that the recording will be deleted as soon as the study or the research is completed.

7 Results

The participants are 5 foreign first-year nursing students who are enrolled in 2022 Spring semester and had their first clinical practice in May 2022. It consists of 3 females and 2 males of different nationalities, aged between 19–40 years old (*Mean age = 28.6*), the primary language of use during conversation is English and their practice placed used languages are Swedish and Finnish (shown in Table 2). One of the participants is a nurse in their country and has been in a different hospital department. The participant enrolled in this course to continue and pursue her profession in Finland. Some of the participants have relatives here in Finland who are in healthcare settings, and some have no previous experience and no family or relatives in healthcare settings even in their own country (See Table 3).

Table 3. Participants' length of stay and Experiences in nursing fields.

Participants	Length of stay in Finland	Experience in the Nursing field	Relatives in the nursing or medical field
Participant #1	6 months	No	No
Participant #2	4 months	Yes	Yes
Participant #3	1 year	No	Yes
Participant #4	5 months	No	Yes
Participant #5	9 months	No	No

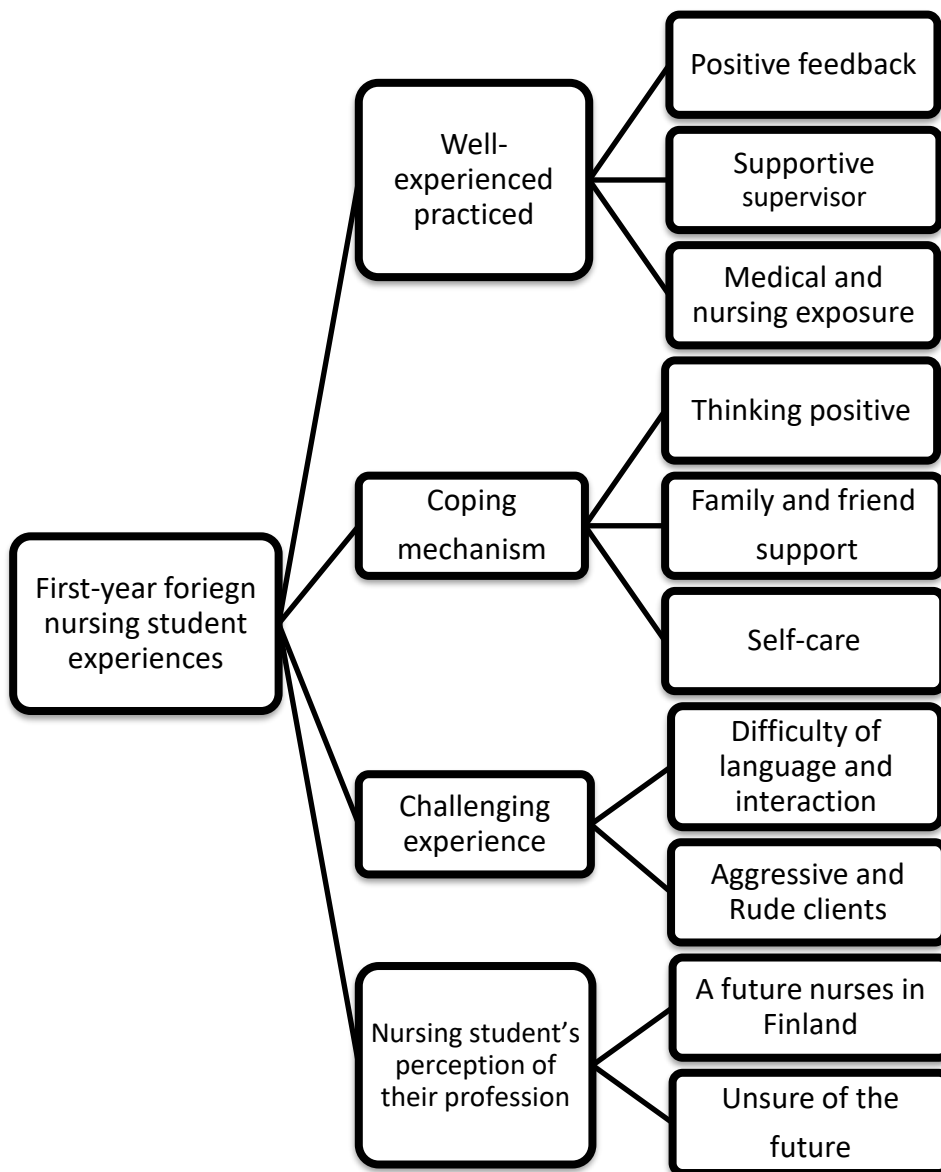
Before conducting an actual interview, a pilot study has been made to determine the outcome of the interview and to test the credibility of the questions that were asked. Due to the request of the participant, the interview was done on Teams and was recorded. During the pilot interview, there was a lack of interest to answer some of the questions, and only small and short answers were provided. To meet the essence and the objective of the research study, the questionnaires were revised and properly examined to see if the information needed to obtain was met.

In conducting the interview, the 4 foreign first-year nursing students positively described their clinical practice. When choosing the participant, the interviewer believed that each participant would give detailed and more insight information into their first clinical practice. But during the collection and analysis of data, 1 participant has been rejected because of a

technical problem. The recording was interrupted because of the internet connection. The interview lasted for 10mins only with minimal information gathered by the interviewer.

When analyzing the data of the 4 first-year foreign nursing students who positively described their clinical practice. These participants undergo their clinical practice in an Elderly home for a month. Four themes were identified following with 10 sub-themes: *Well-experienced practice*, *The coping mechanism of the foreign first-year nursing student*, *Challenging experience during their clinical practice*, and *Nursing students as future nurses*. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Four themes and 10 sub-themes.



7.1 Challenging experiences during their clinical practice

The students experience a couple of challenges during their practice. It was not easy for them since it was their first time in the field, with different cultures and languages. 2 sub-themes were identified during the coding: The difficulty of language and interaction and aggressive and restless patients.

7.1.1 The difficulty of language and interaction

The student mentioned that it was difficult for them to have a practice place that is not in the English language. Although their supervisor speaks English to them, it is different when they start communicating with their patients who don't know how to speak English but rather Finnish and Swedish only.

“My biggest challenge was the language...I don't practice Swedish, only Finnish...But the practice place that I got is a Swedish place. When a client comes to me to ask something they get frustrated because I could not understand them” (P1)

“language is the most challenging part in the first practice compared to others...Swedish and Finnish it is always hard...because it is not my first or even my second language.” (P4)

Some student has mentioned that they already know some Finnish and Swedish words but when someone who is native in Finland speaks to them, it is difficult to understand, and it is confusing. Sometimes, the fact that the clinical practice does not use a common language might be quite stressful to students and their clients.

“The language is difficult, everybody speaks differently. But not all clients, I mean they speak the same language, but they phrase it differently. So sometimes it is the same thing, but it is really confusing. When staffs are having their endorsement before the shifts start, I really find it difficult. Although my supervisor translate it to me, I really find it frustrating because I know I have to understand everything but I can't. (P2)

“The main thing that is challenging...the language. I know already how to work everything, sometimes, I want to ask why, but I am afraid if they talk to me in Finnish because I would not understand...when my supervisor tried to speak to me in Finnish and I could not understand, the inappropriate

actions (headshake) and the word like HAAAAAAAY makes me uncomfortable, because I know that she is not happy and disappointed...knowing that she needs to translate it again in English”
(P3)

One foreign nursing student has emphasized how important language is in the practice place, and how it is difficult for a foreign nursing student to learn the language used in the practice place. The frustrations they felt after the endorsement was that they don't understand everything that must be understood about their patients' condition. Although their supervisor translates some words for them, they know that it is also stressful for their supervisor to do the same thing over and over again. The feeling of must learn the language for the sake of the patient's needs and understanding is always their concern when they go for their clinical practice every day.

”one time, my Finnish client asked for a water now to drink and I was like preparing her water for bath...I misunderstood her, I thought that she want me to bath her now. Luckily, she was in a good mood and asked me how long I have been here in Finland...when my supervisor came, the client told my supervisor that she was asking for a water to drink because she was not feeling good...what if that client wanted different thing...an important thing?? How can I understand her that much???...I know Finnish language is hard and I need to work on it more.” (P3)

Some foreign nursing student lack of confidence to care for their patients. Although they already know the basic needs of these people, when it comes to the expression of patients' feelings and needs they find it difficult since maintaining regular communication and care is very important in the nursing field.

7.1.2 Aggressive and restless patients

Two of the participants experiences aggressive and restless patients. They find it challenging to handle because of the different cases and moods of their patients every day.

“One patient called me with so many names (inappropriate words) because she doesn't like what I am doing.” (P2)

“there was a time that this client wanted to go out in the room, but I won’t let him because he peed and poop all over his diaper and pants, what he did was scratch and slap my hand” (P1)

P1 has emphasized that he doesn’t know if there is something wrong with his care, does this patient didn’t understand everything he said because he can’t speak properly the language that the client used, or if it is because of his mental illness. Every day they have a different patient to care for and these patients do not have only 1 (one) diagnosis or problem to focus on. These foreign students also emphasize the mental disorder course must be tackled before their clinical practice since they are all going to a clinical placement where clients’ aggressiveness and rudeness can be caused by their mental illness and not by racism.

7.2 Coping mechanism of the foreign first-year nursing student

Foreign first-year nursing students' outstanding academic progress might be traced back to their use of effective coping mechanisms. During their time in clinical placement, students used these helpful methods of dealing with the pressures they encountered. The student developed resilient responses to adversity and used these responses to overcome obstacles. There were 3 sub-themes identified; Thinking positively, Self-Care, and Family and friends support.

7.2.1 Thinking positively

It seems that maintaining a positive attitude was the key to assisting these students in overcoming their challenges and giving them a confidence boost.

“I was having an open mind. Because I am used to a hospital setting, at the moment you get in, you get an adrenaline rush..today I am still learning and I need assistance, but tomorrow or maybe the next day I can do it by myself...I just need to encourage myself that everything has to be learn during this practice step by step.” (P2)

“I went there in a futuristic mind that everything is going to be alright” (P3)

“Practicing or learning things day by day is not that hard. I keep on telling myself that I can learn their language in the future.” (P4)

These foreign first-year nursing students benefited from the reminder to have a more optimistic and constructive attitude to challenging situations, expecting the greatest possible outcomes rather than preparing for the worst.

7.2.2 Self-care

Just sharing a pleasant dinner with other people, getting an adequate amount of rest, or taking a relaxing, lengthy hot bath makes them relaxed and stress-free moments or days other than thinking about their clinical placement.

“All I want is to have a long sleep and after, I review the notes that I took from my practice and study some techniques to make me a better care giver.” (P1)

“after a long day of practice, I just want a nice hot bath and delicious food and get back on track again to study” (P3)

These coping strategies help the student to achieve a more calm state of mind with the aid of these coping skills, which in turn prepares them to deal with the problems that lie ahead.

7.2.3 Family and friends support

Students found that talking about their experiences with classmates, friends, or family reduced their anxiety and helped them find the drive to keep learning. The students found that by trying to talk to their peers or communicating with someone who was going through a similar situation, they were better able to discover coping solutions that would aid them throughout their practice.

“I am glad that there are people I can talk to...and spend time with” (P1)

“...I called my cousins after my 2nd practice and I told them that I was nervous and need someone to talk to, glad I have them here in Finland” (P4)

The mental and emotional support of family members was significant to them. It wasn't only that they provided additional comfort and advice; they also facilitated conversation and diverted attention away from the issues at hand.

7.3 Well-experienced practiced

All the participants were asked about their experiences during their first clinical practice. They described their experiences in well-experienced practice and an event where they learn a lot about what healthcare practitioners do in an Elderly Care Home. As they explore the nature of work here in Finland for a month, 3 sub-categories were identified during the interaction: Positive feedback, Medical and nursing exposure, and Supportive supervisors.

7.3.1 Positive feedback

During the clinical practice of these foreign student nurses, they viewed their experience favorably and positively. These participants mentioned:

“It was fun, amazing, smooth and a bit challenging as well” (P1)

“It was fine, fun, hhmhhh this practice uhmm it is not that easy for me. But overall experience I can say that it was okay and I learn a lot.” (P3)

“my 1st placement was wonderful. It was good than I expected. Because it thought language will be the issue for me” (P4)

P2 was interested in many ways since it was her first time entering a healthcare facility in Finland. She also said that she was curious about how healthcare practitioners handle elderly people or some patients every day since they do not have an elderly home in their country.

“my practice it was...INTERESTING to see, to be in that type of setting... I can't see that I was afraid. I didn't have any fear. But curious” (P2)

Although these students experiences some challenges and it was not easy for them during their 1-month of clinical practice, they still described it in a way that is favorable to them in which they also learn a lot. But, the overall experience was fun and wonderful for these foreign first-year nursing students and these experiences contributed to their learning development and education.

7.3.2 Medical and nursing exposure

As these students are exposed to different situations in a healthcare facility, they are overwhelmed by what they experienced and what others taught them. As future nurses, they need to know even the slightest detail about their patients even though they are still a student.

“I learned...few things about medicine, or why these people end up there, the circumstances of their life that led them there or the condition” (P3)

“I was more prepared, I think compared to everyone in class. Especially to those who have never been in a hospital setting or to those who never cared in that setting. I do not have experience in elderly but I think, mentally, physically I was prepared.. I saw how these old people shift from being aggressive to very calm because of the medicine they took...and it’s quite interesting” (P2)

P2 mentioned that because she was a nurse in her country before entering nursing in Finland, it makes her more prepared and confident in dealing with different clients.

7.3.3 Supportive supervisors and mentors

The students have mentioned that throughout their clinical practice, their supervisors and mentors are supportive of them in terms of learning every aspect of nursing and language skills from the first day to the last day of clinical practice.

*“I have a good relationship with my supervisor as well as my colleagues...They are such a helpful when it comes to my language problems and also they teach me some techniques how to handle the clients...my mentor in school which is L**n*, she update us every week and asked if there is any problems or if I am doing okay in my practice place.” (P1)*

“Everybody is good, the boss, the supervisor, everybody is amazing. They are supportive and teach me a lot” (P2)

“My supervisor helps me to cope with them (clients)...she teaches me some strategies to make it easier for me to deal with these people. He is so very helpful and supportive...I really appreciate their kindness to me...My mentor keeps on updating me and she keep her line open in case we have problems in the practice we can call her anytime...she makes me feel secured and she really make sure that you are okay, or comfortable in the work place. ” (P3)

7.4 Nursing student's as nurses'

Despite certain difficulties, the informants emphasized the good impact of clinical practice on their education. The participants were questioned on the goals they have for their professional lives and the advantages they anticipate gaining from their education in Finland in the future. The researcher identified 2 (two) sub-themes; Unsureness about the future and a future Nurse in Finland.

7.4.1 Unsureness about the future

The two participants have emphasized that they are having a second thoughts about pursuing their profession as a nurse in Finland. Both students have expressed the need to improve their language skills for them to find a suitable job.

"I don't know...or I am having doubt...because I was thinking that it is difficult for foreign nationals to work in a full setting hospital because of too many language required and does not use English...even if how good or best you are in the field but if your language seems to be the problem, there is possibilities that you can't work" (P2)

Being a nurse..I am hoping...but you know, it is difficult to find a job in a hospital because of the language. It will take many years to be one, i guess. (P4)

The students thought that they need further assistance in order to acquire the native language. Due to their limited understanding of their native tongue, some students had the impression that they were treated unfairly and were not accepted. Students were faced with a variety of obstacles that they cannot express due to language limitations.

7.4.2 A future Nurse in Finland

Aside from these foreign nursing students are aware of the healthcare shortage, particularly of Nurses in Finland. Other participants are being futuristic about their profession to become successful nurses in Finland. They have a positive attitude that they can finish their study and work as a nurse in an elderly home or a hospital. There is a feeling of fulfillment in their profession when they knew they help and assist those people who need medical/nursing attention.

“I choose this kind of profession because I wanted to become one. So even if I encounter 2nd or my last clinical practice, I would like to be part of the health care team...I am also aware about the nursing shortage of the country” (P3)

“A nurse in the geriatric ward or in an elderly home. maybe because this is my first experience. But I want to pursue my studies and become a nurse someday..though there are some challenges, I know I can handle it...little by little I know I can make it, even how hard the language or any other things.” (P1)

Although they emphasized that there are difficulties or other challenges aside from language problems, they intend to finish what they started and make those challenges a learning experience.

8 Discussion

Every day, foreign first-year nursing students connect with their peers who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and speak a broad range of languages. As they prepare themselves for their first clinical placement in which they are exposed to different scenarios and different people aside from their classmates and teachers at school, their feeling of anxiety and excitement comes to their senses.

The purpose of this study is to explore the different experiences of foreign first-year nursing students during their first clinical practice. The researcher of this study was overwhelmed by the interaction that has been made. Although one (1) participant was rejected, the research's questions were answered in a detailed manner by the remaining respondent.

In this study, the researcher identified four themes: *Well-experienced practice, The coping mechanism of the foreign first-year nursing student, Challenging experience during their clinical practice, and Nursing students as future nurses.*

In the first theme, the main source of their difficulties in their first clinical experience is the language barrier. Foreign first-year nursing students from countries other than Finland may have significant challenges communicating with their patients and supervisors due to language issues. When communicating with the patients, it is a usual method to rely on supervisors who communicate the same language or dialect as the patients for interpretation,

despite the fact that doing so has its own unique set of challenges as these students must use it when necessary for them to learn the Finnish or Swedish language (Mattila, Pitkäljärvi, & Eriksson, 2010). The Novia University of Applied Science has made a major move for these students to learn the Swedish language in school by attending the Språkklinik kafe. The Novia University of Applied Science helps these students as they prepare themselves for future practices regarding language difficulties. Different foreign nationalities were in this program for free and they were able to communicate with other patients to practice their language in one of the Elderly homes in Korsholm, Solgården. Other than language barriers, foreign first-year nursing students have experienced rude and aggressive clients. These students didn't see it as a negative effect in their clinical placement but as a challenging experience in which they are taking care of patients who are old, most are demented patients, and patients who are away from their families and love ones.

The participants detailed a variety of approaches they had used to successfully finish their clinical practice. The student's ability to deal with their clinical practice was significantly improved by the fact that they could discuss the challenges and worries associated with their clinical learning experiences. The study confirms the findings of prior research on how students handle stressful circumstances during clinical practice (Chapman & Orb, 2001), and it also sheds light on the student's motivation to succeed in their bachelor practical program. The participant used self-care and was able to interact with other people to cope with difficulties during their clinical practice.

The participants perceived their profession in two different ways, some are futuristic, and some are unsure whether they continue their studies as a nurse or not because of language recommendations when working in the health care field. Although there are several circumstances and Finland has a current problem with the nursing shortage, these students understand that being a nurse entails a lot of pressure and effort (Buerhaus, Donelan, Norman, & Dittus, 2005).

The participant of this current study evaluated their overall clinical practice as a Well-experiences practice. Discrimination and racism were never an issue during their clinical practice. As these students have received favorable support from their supervisors and mentors at school during their clinical practice. According to Mattila, Pitkäljärvi, and Erickson (2010), appropriate social interactions, a welcoming environment, and positive reinforcement have all been proven to play a crucial role in the student learning process. The response given by the student, their clinical supervisors, and their mentors is a very important

component throughout their clinical practice (Mattila, Pitkäljärvi, & Eriksson, 2010). Furthermore, they also encouraged students to explore ways in which they might lessen the burdens imposed by their clinical practice.

Benner's theory of "Novice to Expert" tells that every student needs the direction and information that is supplied by their supervisors and mentors in order to progress from one stage of growth to the next. Because of clinical educators, have access to the traditions and standards of the clinical units in which they are getting the clinical expertise necessary to provide specialized patient care (Ozdemir, 2019). As a result of this, foreign first-year nursing students who undergo their first clinical practice and who have no experience in the clinical setting will experience a perspective shift of what was Benner pointing out.

9 Limitations of the study

However, some limitations were observed during the study. First, the research study was limited due to the limited number of participants. The utilization of a more substantial number of clinical subjects in future studies would be advantageous. There is a further probability that there is plenty of information to gather and an increase in understanding of how to meet the needs of nursing students at various points in their clinical practice. Secondly, the potential biases in which the researcher was included in the clinical practice of the foreign first-year students. However, the researcher maintained professionalism during the interview while influencing the participants to speak confidently their experiences and concerns during their clinical practice. Lastly, this study effort only gives a partial picture of the situation since the study respondents were all foreign nursing students and did not include any opinion of nurses who supervised the student during their clinical practice. Consequently, to receive the complete aspect of both sides, nurses' opinions and their experiences with foreign first-year nursing students should also be considered, as this may aid in establishing effective communication and collaboration between them. Therefore, this may be a promising area for further study.

10 Conclusion

Clinical practice is an essential aspect for nursing student in which they would learn different approaches, techniques, and actual problems that was never taught in school. The result that has been provided, shows that 4 foreign first-year nursing students were satisfied with their first clinical practice. Although these students had experienced some difficulties during their

clinical placement, they viewed every challenge as a learning experience to be better communicators and health workers. Coping strategies help them to overcome their stress and anxiety which could lead to having a good working relationship with supervisors, colleagues, and patients in the clinical setting. Despite being a foreign student, they were not discriminated, not of belongingness, or racism was experienced. Enhancing the communication skills of these foreign nursing students is important in their profession. The integration program for foreign nursing students must be continued or improved since communication is very important in the nursing field in which these students are having difficulty with most of their experiences.

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Appendix 1. Informed Consent

INFORMATION LETTER AND INFORMED CONSENT

Mr./Ms. _____,

I am a second-year student in the Nursing degree program at Novia University of Applied Sciences. I would like to invite you to participate in my thesis study in which I will be conducting an interview to explore the different and unique experiences of foreign first-year nursing students' during their first clinical practice. Your participation is voluntary, you can withdraw or refuse to answer any questions at any time without prejudice.

The interview will be held in a Webex, Teams or a one-on-one interview where we can comfortably discuss. The interview will take approximately 15–20 minutes.

The interview will be recorded, and the confidentiality of all data generated for this research work is assured. No individual identification including name, address, contact details, or email address will be asked. All data will be transcribed and coded to maintain confidentiality. Upon completion of this research, all data collected will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about this research work, kindly contact me or the Supervisor whose details are provided herein.

Participant's Signature Date.....

Sincerely yours,

Kharen E. Genotiva

Email: khagen@edu.novia.fi

Contact No. 040- 8590989

Supervisor: Nina Vestö

Email address: Nina.Vesto@novia.fi

Contact No.

Appendix 2. Semi-structure interview guide questions

Encouragement Phase	<p>Tell me about yourself. (<i>Age, marital status, years of living in Finland, nationality, primary language of use, any experiences in the nursing field or any medical field</i>)</p> <p>How will you describe your experience in your first clinical placement? Can you tell me more about it?</p>
Exploration Phase	<p>Do you experience some challenges, or difficulties during your clinical practice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, can you tell me more about it? And how did you deal with those challenges/difficulties? • If no, were there any episodes throughout your clinical practice that had an influence on you? Can you tell me about it? <p><i>(If a person has already an experience)</i></p> <p>Do you believe your nursing or medical experience helped you with your first clinical practice? What past experience you had that has prepared you for this?</p> <p>Do you believe that your first clinical experience changes your perception as a nursing student? If yes, how? If not, why?</p> <p>How do you see yourself after your first clinical practice as a Nurse in Finland?</p>
Exit Phase	<p>Do you like to add more information about your experience in your first clinical practice?</p>