

Coping Strategies Among Level II Nursing Students on Challenges in Clinical Duty

Vargas, Ruby D.
rdovperps@yahoo.com

Vanessa Lazo
vlazo3619@gmail.com

Nora Al Naiyeff
samuenoora@gmail.com

Ladanan, Gina C.
gina.ladanan1975@gmail.com

Mary Grace Dolot
marygracedolot8@gmail.com

1 – University of Perpetual Help System Manila, Philippines

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Abstract

This study examined the coping strategies used by Level II nursing students at University of Perpetual Help System Manila in managing the challenges encountered during clinical duty. A quantitative correlational research design was employed, involving 164 Level II nursing students during the second semester of the Academic Year 2024–2025. Data were gathered using a validated survey questionnaire that assessed demographic characteristics, challenges encountered during clinical duty, and coping strategies categorized as problem-focused, emotion-focused, and negative coping. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Findings showed that students sometimes experienced challenges related to patient interaction and time-and-place factors, while performance-related challenges were encountered less frequently. Problem-focused coping emerged as the most consistently used strategy, followed by emotion-focused coping, whereas negative coping strategies were used occasionally. Age showed a statistically significant relationship with all types of coping strategies, while sex did not show a significant relationship. The results highlight the importance of providing developmentally appropriate support to nursing students during their early clinical exposure.

Keywords: *nursing students, coping strategies, clinical duty, clinical challenges*



INTRODUCTION

Clinical duty is a major component of nursing education, serving as the bridge between classroom-based learning and real-world patient care. For Level II nursing students, this stage represents their initial exposure to hospital settings where they are expected to apply theoretical knowledge, perform nursing skills, and interact with patients and healthcare professionals under supervision. This transition often presents challenges that may affect students' confidence, performance, and overall well-being.

Nursing students commonly encounter difficulties related to patient communication, clinical performance expectations, and external factors such as transportation, scheduling, and availability of resources. These challenges may influence how students adapt to clinical environments and how effectively they carry out their responsibilities. Without appropriate coping mechanisms, students may experience anxiety, reduced focus, or decreased motivation, which may affect their learning experience and clinical outcomes.

Coping strategies refer to the cognitive and behavioral efforts individuals use to manage situations perceived as challenging or demanding. In the context of nursing education, coping strategies are essential in helping students manage the pressures associated with clinical training. These strategies are commonly classified as problem-focused coping, which involves actively addressing the source of difficulty; emotion-focused coping, which aims to regulate emotional responses; and negative coping strategies, such as avoidance, which may provide temporary relief but are less effective in the long term.

Understanding how nursing students cope with clinical challenges is important for developing appropriate support systems within nursing programs. Early identification of effective and ineffective coping strategies may guide educators in providing interventions that promote resilience, confidence, and professional growth.

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to identify the coping strategies used by Level II nursing students at University of Perpetual Help System Manila in managing the challenges encountered during clinical duty. Specifically, the study aimed to determine the level of challenges encountered in terms of patient-related, performance-related, and time-and-place-related factors, identify the coping strategies employed by the students, and examine the relationship between demographic variables (age and sex) and coping strategies.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the challenges faced by the nursing students at University of Perpetual Help System Manila and what coping strategies they employ to manage them.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of Level II nursing students in terms of:



- 1.1 Age
- 1.2 Sex
2. What are the challenges encountered by Level II nursing students during their clinical duty in terms of:
 - 2.1 Patient-related factors
 - 2.2 Performance-related factors
 - 2.3 Time and Place-related factors
3. Which of the following coping strategies are used by the respondents to manage the challenges encountered during clinical duties in terms of:
 - 3.1 Problem-focused Coping
 - 3.2 Emotion-focused Coping
 - 3.3 Negative Coping
4. Is there a significant relationship between the demographic profile of the students and their coping strategies?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative correlational research design to determine the relationship between demographic variables and coping strategies among Level II nursing students. This design was considered appropriate as it allowed the researchers to examine associations between variables without manipulating them.

Participants and Setting

The respondents consisted of 164 Level II nursing students enrolled at University of Perpetual Help System Manila during the second semester of the Academic Year 2024–2025. Purposive sampling was employed to select students who were currently undergoing clinical duty. This group was chosen because they were in the early phase of clinical exposure, making them suitable participants for examining coping strategies during initial clinical training.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire divided into three parts. The first part gathered demographic information, specifically age and sex. The second part assessed the challenges encountered during clinical duty, categorized into patient-related, performance-related, and time-and-place-related factors. The third part measured coping strategies using an



adapted version of the COPE Inventory, categorized into problem-focused, emotion-focused, and negative coping strategies.

Responses were rated using a 4-point Likert scale. The questionnaire underwent content validation by experts in nursing education and reliability testing to ensure its appropriateness and consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the College of Nursing administration. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and informed consent was secured prior to data collection. Questionnaires were distributed and retrieved after completion, and the collected data were prepared for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

For descriptive statistics, Frequency and Percentage were used to analyze the distribution of demographic variables, providing a clear overview of the respondents' characteristics. Additionally, the Weighted Mean was utilized to determine the average responses in assessing the challenges encountered by nursing students and their coping strategies. Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson's Chi-square test and Spearman Rho correlation, were used to determine the relationship between demographic factors, challenges faced, and coping strategies employed by the students.

Furthermore, Data Analysis techniques are employed to enhance the interpretation of the results, ensuring that the findings are both meaningful and statistically reliable. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was applied.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents according to age.

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
18 - 21 years old	151	92.07%
22 - 25 years old	11	6.71%
30 years old and above	2	1.22%
Total	164	100%



The table shows that the majority of the respondents were between 18 and 21 years old, indicating that most Level II nursing students are in early adulthood. Only a small number of respondents belonged to the older age groups.

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to sex.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Female	133	81.10%
Male	31	18.90%
Total	164	100%

The data indicate that most of the respondents were female, which reflects the typical gender distribution in nursing programs.

Challenges Encountered During Clinical Duty

Table 3 summarizes the challenges encountered by Level II nursing students during clinical duty.

Summary of Challenges Encountered by Level II Nursing Students During Their Clinical Duty	Overall Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Patient-related factors	2.56	Sometimes
Performance-related factors.	2.43	Rarely
Time and Place-related factors.	2.89	Sometimes
OVERALL TOTAL	2.63	Sometimes

The table shows that students sometimes experienced challenges related to patient interaction and time-and-place factors. Transportation issues and distance to clinical sites were among the more frequently encountered concerns. Performance-related challenges were reported less frequently, suggesting that students felt relatively prepared in terms of clinical skills.

Coping Strategies Used by Respondents

Table 4 presents the coping strategies used by the respondents during clinical duty.

Summary of Coping Strategies Used by the Respondents to Manage the Challenges Encountered During Clinical Duties	Overall Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Problem-focused Coping	3.43	Always
Emotion-focused Coping	3.36	Always
Negative Coping	2.91	Sometimes
OVERALL TOTAL	3.23	Sometimes

The results indicate that problem-focused coping was the most frequently used strategy, suggesting that students actively addressed challenges by seeking solutions and support. Emotion-focused coping was also commonly used, while negative coping strategies were used occasionally.

Relationship Between Demographic Profile and Coping Strategies

Table 5 shows the relationship between demographic variables and coping strategies.

Coping Strategy	Demographic Variable	p-value	Interpretation
Problem-focused coping	Age	0.001	Significant
	Sex	0.397	Not significant
Emotion-focused coping	Age	0.043	Significant
	Sex	0.403	Not significant
Negative coping	Age	0.000	Significant
	Sex	0.888	Not significant



The findings reveal that age had a significant relationship with all three types of coping strategies, indicating that coping approaches may vary across age groups. Sex, however, did not show a significant relationship with coping strategies.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate that Level II nursing students encounter a moderate level of challenges during clinical duty, particularly related to external and logistical factors. The frequent use of problem-focused coping suggests that students are generally proactive in managing difficulties encountered in clinical settings. This may reflect the effectiveness of clinical supervision and academic preparation provided to students.

The significant relationship between age and coping strategies suggests that maturity and life experience may influence how students respond to clinical challenges. Younger students may still be developing effective coping mechanisms, while older students may rely on strategies shaped by previous experiences. The absence of a significant relationship between sex and coping strategies indicates that coping behaviors among nursing students are not strongly influenced by gender.

These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the importance of adaptive coping strategies in nursing education. Providing structured support, mentoring, and guidance during early clinical exposure may further enhance students' ability to cope effectively.

CONCLUSION

Level II nursing students at University of Perpetual Help System Manila experience varying challenges during clinical duty, with time-and-place-related factors being the most prominent. Problem-focused coping is the most frequently used strategy, followed by emotion-focused coping, while negative coping strategies are used less often. Age significantly influences the coping strategies employed by students, whereas sex does not. These findings highlight the need for supportive interventions that consider students' developmental stage during early clinical training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, nursing students may benefit from strategies that strengthen their ability to manage challenges encountered during clinical duty. Developing strong communication skills, particularly in explaining medical conditions in simpler terms, can help reduce difficulties in patient interactions. These initiatives may help students build confidence in their ability to handle real-life scenarios more effectively. Additionally, time management techniques can be reinforced to help students balance their responsibilities while minimizing stress. Since transportation issues were a common concern, planning ahead for travel and making necessary adjustments to schedules may improve punctuality and reduce added pressure. Engaging in problem-focused coping strategies, such as seeking guidance from experienced individuals and focusing on learning opportunities during clinical exposure, can further enhance



adaptability. Encouraging emotional resilience through peer support and self-care practices may also contribute to a well-rounded approach to handling stress.

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