



## Original Article



## Assessment of Self-Confidence Among Nursing Students During Clinical Decisions Making

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### ABSTRACT

As nursing students move from classroom theory to actual patient care, clinical decision-making is an essential ability. Their capacity to make wise clinical decisions is greatly influenced by their level of self-confidence. Knowledge, experience, and worry are some of the factors that greatly affect their ability to make decisions. **Objectives:** To assess the self-confidence levels of nursing students during clinical decision-making, highlighting its impact on their ability to provide competent patient care. **Methods:** Between September and October 2024, third- and fourth-year BS nursing students from Upper Swat College of Nursing and Malakand College of Nursing participated in a cross-sectional descriptive study. Convenience sampling was used to choose 80 individuals in total. The Nursing Self-Confidence with Clinical Decision Making (NASC-CDM) questionnaire, which used a Likert-scale style, was used to gather data. SPSS version 26.0 was used for statistical analysis, and frequency (%) was computed. **Results:** Out of 80 participants, 7.5% were women and 92.5% were men. Most pupils (61.3%) were between the ages of 21 and 23. According to the self-confidence scores, 3.7% had low self-confidence, 56.3% had moderate self-confidence, and 40% had strong self-confidence. **Conclusions:** It was concluded that the majority of nursing students demonstrated moderate to high levels of self-confidence when making clinical decisions. Gaining self-assurance via clinical experience and education can enhance one's decision-making capacity, ultimately leading to better patient outcomes.

### INTRODUCTION

Students utilized a clinical placement to put their academic knowledge into practical practice [1, 2]. Extensive clinical practice also improves nursing students' decision-making skills and their capacity for ethical reasoning, compassion, and cultural sensitivity [3]. Furthermore, because clinical decision-making entails critically evaluating patient data and selecting the best course of action, it is crucial to nursing. The procedure is complex and calls for integrating clinical expertise, experience, and sound judgment [4]. Furthermore, clinical decision-making requires the integration of critical and reflective thinking with clinical reasoning abilities [5, 6]. The main factors that affect nursing students' ability to make clinical decisions include knowledge, practice, experience, and interactions with

patients and medical experts [7]. Therefore, increasing self-confidence is important through experience with actual patients [8]. Practitioners, scholars, and educators are interested in the pervasive problem of anxiety among nursing students when making clinical decisions. In the clinical setting, students get accustomed to the challenges of delivering medical services in real-life settings, in which they must work with collaborative groups, control time restrictions, deal with difficult circumstances, and uphold ethical norms [9]. Tension and confidence in themselves are closely linked while making therapeutic decisions [10]. High levels of anxiety may make nursing students doubt their judgment, make mistakes in life-threatening situations, and struggle to put their knowledge into



practice. Increased stress, mistakes, and trouble providing real-world patient care can result from this [9]. While anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or fear about an uncertain outcome. It is a natural stress response but can become overwhelming when excessive [11]. Their capacity to think critically, make decisions, and successfully use theoretical knowledge in practical situations is significantly impacted by their level of confidence [12]. Self-confidence is the belief that one can complete a task, which translates into the person's capacity to achieve their goals [13]. Being self-assured is having faith in one's ability and judgment [14]. Conversely, nursing students' degree of self-confidence has a big impact on how they approach clinical decision-making. Self-assured students are more adept at applying abstract concepts to real-world scenarios, using their knowledge base, and trusting their judgment. Self-assured students are more likely to take on challenges, actively resolve issues, and advocate for themselves in public all of which are critical components of making informed clinical judgments [6]. This study aims to investigate the self-confidence of nursing students during clinical decision-making.

## METHODS

A cross-sectional descriptive study was done to evaluate nursing students' confidence levels when making clinical decisions. From September to October 2024, data from students at Malakand College of Nursing and Upper Swat College of Nursing was gathered and analyzed using a quantitative process. Before starting the study, the researchers asked the study site's administration for permission with reference number 353/USCN/KK. Convenient sampling was used to choose the participants. For statistics, third- and fourth-year BS nursing students were contacted. Those who are willing to engage and are in their clinical years are eligible to take part in the study. With a total population of 150, the sample size was determined using a sample size calculator open Epi version 3 with a 95% confidence interval. Thus, 80 was the obtained sample size. Following a thorough description of the study's goals, the voluntary nature of participation, and the anonymity guaranteed for their answers, each participant gave their informed consent. Every participant's identity was kept confidential by the researchers. Data were safely preserved, and no individual participant was named in published findings or publications. Data were loaded into SPSS version 26.0 for statistical analysis. For both the demographic variable and the self-confidence levels, frequency percentages were computed. To identify nursing students' self-confidence during clinical decision-making, the structured questionnaire was taken from the earlier study [9]. Nursing Self-Confidence with Clinical Decision Making. There were two sections in the

questionnaire. Participants' personal information was covered in the first segment, and then they were directed to use a Likert-style measure to indicate how strongly they consented to every remark to gauge their level of confidence. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was applied to investigate the scales' internal consistency dependability. The final version's alpha coefficients were 180 for total anxiety self-confidence and  $\alpha=0.97$  for the self-confidence subscale. Additionally, the self-confidence tool score was separated into 3 groups: moderate (scores 61-120); high (scores 121-180); and low (scores 6-60). Data was entered and analyzed by SPSS 22.0. Descriptive analysis was conducted by presenting qualitative data with frequencies and percentages.

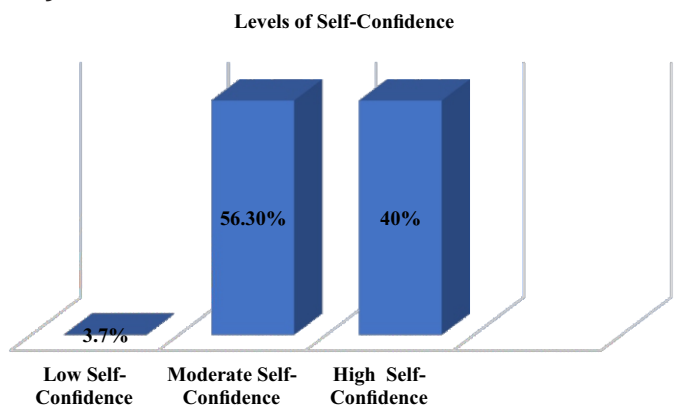
## RESULTS

Six female students (7.5%) and 74 male students (92.5%) make up the gender distribution. 26 participants (32.5%) are between the ages of 18 and 20, 49 (61.3%) are between the ages of 21 and 23, 4 (5%) are between the ages of 24 and 26, and just 1 (1.3%) are older than 27. Results summarise two demographic factors age and gender (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Demographic Information of the Participants (n=80)

Variables	Frequency (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	74 (92.5%)
Female	6 (7.5%)
<b>Age</b>	
18-20	26 (32.5%)
21-23	49 (61.3%)
24-26	4 (5.0%)
Above 27	1 (1.3%)

Results show the majority of participants (40%) have elevated self-confidence, followed by moderate (56.3%), and a minor percentage (3.7%) have low self-confidence (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** The Levels of Self-Confidence

## DISCUSSION

To foster engagement in each step of the nursing process, clinical decision-making is crucial for all medical services professionals. But in nursing school, planning and putting what has been learned into practice makes students anxious and erodes their confidence. Clinical decision-making is influenced by psychological obstacles, low self-esteem, and elevated anxiety. For nursing students to become skilled healthcare professionals in the future, they must be able to make clinical choices with confidence and effectiveness. This study emphasizes the necessity of focused instructional strategies to improve their capacity for making decisions. The current findings revealed that 40% of the participants had a high level of self-esteem. Another study shows that 69% of recent bachelor's degree graduates in nursing expressed strong levels of self-confidence [6]. In the same way, another study found that most participants (56.3%) have high self-confidence [9]. Concerning this nursing students' good feelings are strengthened when they have self-confidence, which promotes well-being. Professional nursing practice is based on clinical decision-making [15]. In this regard, another study found that 31% have moderate self-confidence [6]. While another study found that 41.3%, have moderate self-confidence [9]. These discrepancies could result from different approaches to education, exposure to clinical settings, and institutional training techniques. More practical experience, mentoring, and simulation-based learning in nursing programs can boost students' confidence when it comes to making clinical judgments. Furthermore, worry and anxiety can have a detrimental effect on one's sense of self-worth, so nursing schools must provide networks of support to assist students in overcoming these obstacles [16, 17]. A nurse must possess critical thinking in addition to knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively manage their work in an increasingly demanding clinical setting [17]. Furthermore, current findings revealed that a small portion of the participants 3.7% only have low self-confidence. Similarly, another study found almost the same result 0% have low self-confidence [6]. While another study found that low self-confidence is 2.5% [9]. In contrast, another research suggested that students could not make clinical choices independently [18]. In clinical decision-making, self-confidence is essential because it allows nursing students to use their knowledge efficiently, have faith in their judgment, and react swiftly to patient requirements [10]. Self-assured students are more likely to take charge, work with medical staff, and speak up for their friends and family [19]. Students may hesitate if they lack confidence, which could cause more mistakes and delays in patient treatment. Thus, building future nurses who are capable and decisive requires boosting self-confidence through hands-on training and psychological support [20].

## CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that in clinical decision-making, most nursing students showed moderate to elevated levels of self-confidence. Increasing self-confidence through clinical exposure and training can improve decision-making abilities, which in turn can improve patient outcomes.

### Authors Contribution

Conceptualization: FA, AB

Methodology: FA, AB, JA, MK, NA, AH, FB

Formal analysis: FA, AB, JA

Writing review and editing: FA, AB, MK, NA,

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

### Conflicts of Interest

All the authors declare no conflict of interest.

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