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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CARING AND DECISION MAKING IN NURSING PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS**Muhammad Badrus Soleh^{1*}, Prestasianita Putri², Madiha Mukhtar³**¹Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas dr. Soebandi, Jember, Indonesia²Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas dr. Soebandi, Jember, Indonesia³University of Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

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Author Name: Muhammad Badrus Soleh

Email: badrussoleh150@gmail.com**Abstract**

Introduction: Decision-making is a core competency in clinical practice that nursing students must possess. However, many students still experience doubts and lack of confidence in providing nursing care independently, mainly due to limited clinical experience and undeveloped critical thinking skills. One factor that can influence decision-making is the caring behavior exhibited by nursing students during clinical practice. According to Swanson, caring consists of five dimensions: Being Together, Maintaining Trust, Enabling, Doing For, and Knowing. The application of these dimensions reflects caring behavior and serves as a foundation for holistic thinking. **Methods:** This study aimed to determine the relationship between caring behavior and decision-making among professional nursing students. The research design used was quantitative cross-sectional with 117 respondents selected through total sampling. The instruments used were Swanson's Caring Questionnaire (reliability = 0.97) and Jenkins' Decision-Making Questionnaire (reliability = 0.790). Data were analyzed using Somers'd test with SPSS version 29. **Results:** The results showed that 91% of respondents demonstrated good caring behavior, and 95% were in the moderate to high decision-making ability category. However, the relationship between caring and decision-making was not statistically significant ($p = 0.197$; $p > 0.05$). **Conclusions:** Although most nursing students demonstrated good quality of care and moderate to high decision-making skills, no significant association was found between the two variables. This suggests the need to explore other enabling factors and highlights the importance of enhancing case-based learning and critical thinking skills to improve clinical decision-making.

Keywords: Caring, Decision Making, Nursing Professional Students**Introduction**

Caring has become a global issue in nursing. In the implementation of nursing services, nurses are required to implement good caring. Caring nurses have a role in fulfilling patient satisfaction and are one of the indicators of the quality of patient care. Nurses have a

responsibility to always apply the principles of caring in providing nursing care. Caring in providing care (caring) must be practiced since students are in Nursing Education. Caring behavior applied by students since the nursing profession stage has a significant impact, one of which is greater satisfaction. They feel happy and satisfied because they can provide good care to prepare themselves to become nurses. Provide good care in order to prepare themselves to become professional nurses. The perception of caring behavior of nursing students in the clinical practice process is considered still lacking and needs to be improved, this shows that students' perceptions of caring only include the understanding of caring. Caring only includes the understanding of caring (Aprilianti Sihotang & Aileen Joan Rantung, 2024).

Based on Aiken's research (2012) it was found that 11% of nurses in Ireland and 47% in Greece had poor quality caring services. Another study in Indonesia found that 45% of nurses had poor caring (Putri et al., 2023). According to Susilaningsih research (2020), 45.2% of professional students had positive caring of less than 50% of the total respondents. On the other hand, 70.7% of the 130 students surveyed had fairly good caring interactions (Susilaningsih et al., 2020). According to Rahayu's research (2018) in the inpatient ward of Dr. Hospital. Drajat Prawiranegara Serang, of the 27 people who answered, 25 (95.5%) had good knowledge about caring and behaved well, while 2 (7.4%) showed poor behavior (Rahayu, 2018). A study conducted by Lumanatobing (2019) showed that most professional students, namely 52.85%, had poor awareness of caring, while 48.15% had good awareness of caring (Lumbantobing et al., 2019). From the results of a preliminary study on 39 professional nursing students who were in the practice field in November 2024, information was obtained from 4 professional nursing students, 3 of whom had good caring and 1 of whom had sufficient caring. The most influential factor in nursing decision making is the caring provided by nurses to patients (Rachmaningsih N et al., 2024). According to Fero (2009) in (Ermawaty et al., 2022) To improve the quality of decision making, a nursing student must have good caring behavior, where a nursing student has the ability to provide comfort, attention, and affection, and be responsive to various requests and can determine priorities. Clinical decision-making practices are the most appropriate, beneficial, and acceptable choices among solutions to overcome client and family problems. The type of care given after a patient and their family are diagnosed with a disease is included in clinical decision making in the nursing process. This includes determining the emotional, socio-cultural, and economic deficiencies of patients and their families. Next, use these skills to address these deficiencies (Durmaz Edeer & Sarıkaya, 2015; Jenkins & Helen May, 1983). The nursing process depends on making appropriate decisions

and implementing interventions that are appropriate to the patient's needs (Ayik & Arslan, 2024).

Nursing students are often faced with ethical dilemmas in decision-making, they must consider all aspects in determining the diagnosis and intervention in nursing care. If nursing students who undergo clinical practice can improve caring, it can increase the level of patient satisfaction and the quality of service (Widiarti & Nur Izzah, 2024; Yousriatin et al., 2024). If caring is bad, the quality of decision-making skills is also bad. Thus, it causes students to make inaccurate decisions so that they cannot meet patient needs and reduce responsibility to patients (Ayik & Arslan, 2024). Therefore, decision-making is influenced by caring in patient care in an effort to improve the quality of service (Rachmaningsih N et al., 2024). Caring is not only required in work, but must also be a part of the nurse. Thus, nurses can provide more sincere services and improve the quality of life of patients (Arum Anindika L. et al., 2024).

Caring can be fostered by building self-confidence during the nursing education process, providing space to empathize, and developing the concept of nursing care and preparing oneself to prepare as a professional nurse candidate (Putri et al., 2023). Swanson's Caring has five dimensions of caring, including: maintaining belief, knowing, being with, doing for, and enabling which can influence nurses' decision-making in the nursing process (Rachmaningsih, 2024) By applying Swanson's five dimensions of caring, this can be used as a strategy for implementation in the nursing process, which begins with assessment and ends with nursing evaluation. So, caring is very important in the care process (Kusnanto, 2019). There are 3 categories of Swanson caring supporters, namely: clients, nurses, and organizations and have a Professional Practice Model (PPM), namely: Leadership, compensation and rewards, and professional relationships. If these three components are implemented in a clinical environment, they will support caring practices in service (Tonges & Ray, 2011). If nursing students who undergo clinical practice can improve caring, then this can increase the level of patient satisfaction and the quality of service (Widiarti & Nur Izzah, 2024; Yousriatin et al., 2024). Thus, the purpose of the researcher is to determine the Relationship between Caring and Decision Making in Nursing Students.

Methods

The type used in this study is quantitative, with a cross-sectional approach. total sampling technique and a sample size of 117 respondents. The criteria for participants in this study consist of inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria include students of the Regular Nursing Professional Study Program at Dr. Soebandi University in Jember and

students who are willing to be respondents in the study. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include subjects who cannot be involved in the study, namely nursing students who are on leave or who are sick. This research instrument uses a questionnaire. The Caring questionnaire instrument by Swanson with a total of 14 questions and using a Likert scale that has been dominated by three answer categories, the validation calculation is declared valid with a calculated r value $> r$ table ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$) = valid, and the results of the reliability test on the caring variable obtained a reliability of 0.97, it can be concluded that the instrument is declared reliable. The Decision Making questionnaire instrument by Jenkins with a total of 40 questions and using a Likert scale that has been dominated by 3 answer categories, the validation calculation is declared valid with a calculated r value $> r$ table. The reliability results on the Decision Making variable are obtained at 0.790, it can be concluded that the Decision Making instrument is declared reliable. The data collection procedure was carried out by giving a questionnaire when the nursing professional students were participating in a clinical practice program that had been going on for one semester. Data analysis used SPSS version 29. This study used univariate and bivariate analysis. Univariate analysis was carried out to determine the frequency distribution and description of each variable that had been studied, namely Caring and Decision Making. Bivariate analysis used the Somers'd correlation test. The statistical test used in this study has been ethically approved by KEPK Universitas dr Soebandi Jember No.386 / KEPK / UDS / VI / 2024.

Results And Discussion

Results

The number of respondents in this study was 117 nursing students. The general data in this study are as follows.

Table 1.1 Frequency Distribution of Characteristics in January by Nursing Professional Students at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Jember (n: 117)

No	Variable	f	%
1	Gender		
	- Male	22	18,8%
	- Female	95	81,2%
	Total	117	100%
2	Age		
	- 20 years	1	9%
	- 21 years	4	3,4%
	- 22 years	32	27,4%
	- 23 years	57	48,7%
	- 24 years	19	16,2%

	- 25 years	4	3,4%
	Total	117	100%
3	Length of Clinical Practice		
	- >1 Semester	117	100%
	Total	117	100%

Source : primary data, 2025

Table 1.1 shows that most of the respondents were female, which was 95 people (81.2%). With the age of 20 years, which was 1 person (9%), the age of 21 years was 4 people (3.4%), the age of 22 years was 32 people (27.4%), the age of 23 years was 58 people (48.7%), the age of 24 years was 19 people (16.2%), the age of 25 years was 4 people (3.4%). All nursing profession students have taken more than 1 semester in the Nursing Profession Study Program, Dr. Soebandi University, Jember.

Table 1.2 Distribution of Caring Frequency in January by Nursing Professional Students at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Jember

No	Variable	f	%
1.	Caring		
	- Good	107	91,5%
	- Enough	10	8,5%
	- Less	0	
	Total	117	100%

Source: primary data, 2025

Table 1.2 explains the frequency of Caring in Nursing Professional Students, where as many as 107 people (91.5%) of the total respondents have a caring frequency that is classified as good. As many as 10 people (8.5%) are at a frequency that is classified as sufficient. The results of the study also showed that there were no nursing professional students with a frequency that was classified as lacking.

Table 1.3 Frequency Distribution of Decision Making in January by Nursing Professional Students at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Jember

No	Variable	f	%
1.	Decision Making		
	- High	43	36,8%
	- Medium	68	58,1%
	- Low	6	5,1%
	Total	117	100%

Source: primary data, 2025

Table 1.3 explains the frequency of Decision Making of Nursing Professional Students, as many as 43 people (36.8%) of the total respondents have a high frequency of Decision Making. As many as 68 people (58.1%) are at a moderate frequency, There are 6 (5.1%) nursing professional students with a low frequency based on the results of this study.

Table 1.4 Relationship between Caring and Decision Making of Nursing Professional Students (n: 117)

	Decision Making				P Value
		High	Medium	Low	
Caring	Good	41	61	5	107
	Enough	2	7	1	10
	Less	0	0	0	0
	Total	43	68	6	117

Source: primary data, 2025

Table 1.4 shows a p-value of 0.197 (>0.05) indicating that there is no significant relationship between caring quality and the decision-making ability of nursing professional students. Most of the nursing profession students who have good caring quality tend to have decision-making skills in the medium (61 students) and high (41 students) categories. There are a small number of students who are in the low category (5 respondents). Students with sufficient caring quality are mostly in the medium (7 students) and high (2 students) categories. And 1 student is in the low category. No students were found to have poor caring quality.

Discussion

Caring Behavior of Nursing Professional Students

The results of the study showed that most nursing professional students had good caring qualities, as many as 107 people (91%). This indicates that the process of educating nursing professional students has succeeded in forming and instilling basic values of caring in students effectively. The Doing for dimension (mean: 12.89/85.93%) showed the highest average value, stating that students carried out professional actions in the cooling process. This reflects that nursing professional students tend to focus on carrying out technical killing tasks according to clinical practice standards. However, in the Knowing dimension (mean: 4.15/82.91%) which is related to understanding the condition experienced by the patient, it has the lowest average score. This dimension is related to the ability of nursing students to understand the patient's condition as a whole, both physically, psychologically, socially, culturally, and spiritually. This low average score indicates that there are still limitations in the ability of students to truly recognize the needs, feelings, and holistic understanding of patients. This can be caused by several factors, such as limited interaction time, clinical practice workload, or lack of building therapeutic communication with patients. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen empathy learning, therapeutic communication skills, and holistic understanding of patients during clinical practice. This reflects the students' ability to provide real nursing actions, which is an important part of the clinical practice process. In line with this, (Sumarni & Hikmanti, 2021) explained that students' caring behavior in the education process is very important, because

nursing education is the initial stage in understanding the values and essence of the nursing profession.

Students who develop caring behavior during the nursing professional education stage will help in learning and can improve nursing action skills. Caring that is applied since the education period will have a positive impact on the satisfaction of the students themselves, because they feel able to provide good care as a form of preparation to become professional nurses (Aprilianti Sihotang & Aileen Joan Rantung, 2024). High quality caring will also affect the satisfaction of patients and their families in receiving nursing services (Syamsuddin et al., 2024). Swanson's caring theory in The Caring Model explains five main processes that are the core of caring behavior, namely: Knowing, being with, doing for, enabling, and maintaining belief (Jansson & Adolfsson, 2011). These five processes can be used as strategies in implementing nursing care, starting from the assessment stage to the nursing evaluation stage. This strengthens the role of caring as a central concept in all stages of nursing (Marthea Raile Alligood, 2013).

The high quality of caring in most nursing profession students shows that the nursing education process has been able to instill the basic values of nursing effectively. The educational environment plays a role in shaping students' empathy and professionalism which will contribute to improving the quality of learning and clinical practice skills. Factors that can influence the quality of Caring are gender. Based on the characteristics in table 1.1, most nursing profession students, 95 students (81%) are female. The nursing profession is generally dominated by women, because they tend to have higher empathy and sensitivity. Historically, the initial concept of nursing was rooted in maternal instincts. This statement is in line with Florence Nightingale's theory which states that there are differences in abilities in human interaction between men and women, where women have a greater level of sensitivity than men (Indra Wijaya et al., 2024). However, male and female students still have the same opportunity to do good caring. Caring is a competency that can be developed by all individuals regardless of gender through the right educational process. Therefore, educational institutions have a responsibility to create a learning environment that can support the development of caring behavior for all students during the educational process.

Then, the factor that can affect the quality of Caring is age. Based on the characteristics in table 1.1, nursing profession students are in the age range of 20-25 years. Where caring behavior in nursing students is influenced by age and their perception of the caring behavior of friends in the group. Age is also an internal factor that influences caring behavior. The younger the age, the lower the quality of caring. Younger ages still have difficulty controlling their

emotions. As they get older, nursing students will develop positive traits in carrying out their duties, such as having better interaction experiences and being committed to maintaining the quality of their nursing care (Sumarni & Hikmanti, 2021; Wahyudi et al., 2017).

The age range of 20-25 years is a transition phase from late adolescence to early adulthood. In this age range, it can affect the quality of caring provided. Because it is related to emotional maturity and individual perception of the environment faced. Younger students tend to have limitations in controlling emotions and depth of empathy, which results in a lack of caring quality. As they get older and experience more experienced, students show development in interpersonal and professional aspects. Thus, nursing profession students are expected to be able to increase awareness to develop affective aspects in every clinical learning and nursing education needs to integrate character building and interpersonal communication as an effort to improve the quality of caring for students of various ages.

Nursing Professional Student Decision Making

Based on the results of the study in table 1.3, it shows that in the decision making of Nursing Professional Students, 43 people (37%) of the total respondents have a high frequency of decision making. 68 people (58%) are in a moderate frequency, and there are 6 (5%) nursing professional students with a low frequency. The highest average score for nursing professional students' decision making is in the category of seeking information or choices (Mean: 4.14), which indicates a tendency for students to adopt recommendations from senior nurses in clinical decision making without looking for other alternatives. The lowest score was found in the category of seeking new, unbiased information (Mean: 3.14) which indicates that some students still consider the process of seeking new information as something troublesome compared to its benefits. This finding reflects that students' independence and critical thinking skills in the decision-making process still need to be improved, especially in terms of exploring information objectively and comprehensively to support more accurate clinical decisions.

The decision-making ability of nursing students is still in the development stage, not yet fully mature or optimal. The quality of decision-making of nursing students is classified as moderate because it is influenced by fundamental factors. Students still have limited experience in the field of practice, considering that they have only been in the field of practice for a few months. In addition, the lack of case-based learning will have an impact on the suboptimal critical thinking ability. The integration process between theoretical knowledge and real practice that is still ongoing will take time to develop optimally.

The importance of improving students' cognitive abilities through case-based learning and reflective discussions that train students to think critically during their professional education. To prepare nursing students to be more mature in making the right and responsible decisions. The ability to make the right decisions when providing nursing care, in addition to improving the quality of health services, this ability can also increase their self-confidence and ability to face challenges in the future (Christafenny & Justina Purwarini, 2024). The many nursing stages that nursing students must face, encourage students to provide maximum care with existing limitations. make decisions in providing nursing care that is in accordance with the patient's clinical needs (Ayik & Arslan, 2024). There are several stages in nursing decision making, including: identifying problems, collecting data, determining goals, planning nursing actions, seeking other information objectively and evaluating the results of decisions made (Carvalho et al., 2017; Jenkins & Helen May, 1983).

Nursing students in making nursing decisions also need to understand the basic things that are the basis for their implementation, including the ability to think critically, choose priority nursing problems, consider patient rights and values, collaborate between professionals and be able to carry out continuous evaluation (Johansen & O, 2015). The quality of nursing students' decision-making is influenced by several factors that influence each other, including: the level of student knowledge, critical thinking skills they have, experience in the practice field, and the learning environment and support from the practice field supervisor (Alnjadat et al., 2024; Arkan et al., 2023). In addition, Caring can also provide nurses with the ability to understand and help patients, especially in making the right care decisions (Firmansyah et al., 2019). Therefore, the practice field supervisor is also expected to play a role in providing space for the development of structured student decision-making. Efforts to improve the quality of caring and improve the ability to make decisions must go hand in hand in the nursing education process, to produce prospective nurses who are technically and emotionally competent.

Relationship between Caring and Decision Making in Nursing Professional Students

Based on the results of the Somers' d test analysis, a coefficient of 0.095 was obtained with a significance value of 0.197. These results indicate a relationship between the variables tested, but the relationship is weak and not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This means that although there is a tendency for a relationship, it is not strong enough to be concluded as a statistically significant relationship. The relationship between caring behavior of nursing professional students and Decision Making has a coefficient of 0.062 with a standard error of

0.048 and a significance value of 0.197. This shows that although there is a correlation between the two variables, the influence shown is still small and not significant.

Thus, caring of nursing students cannot be said to be a dominant factor influencing the dependent variable in this study. Furthermore, the results of the analysis of the relationship between decision making and nursing students as the dependent variable show a coefficient of 0.207 with a standard error of 0.150. Although this coefficient value is greater than other variables, the level of significance remains at 0.197 indicating that the relationship is still not strong enough to be considered significant. This indicates that decision making may have an influence on the dependent variable, but is not strong enough to be proven. Therefore, the caring and decision making variables cannot be used as the main factors that have a significant influence. Therefore, further study is needed on other factors that may have a greater impact on nursing students' decision making.

Conceptually, caring in the nursing profession is the core and an indicator of service quality in which there must be a decision-making process. Fero (2009) in (Ermawaty et al., 2022). Stated that to improve the quality of decision-making, a nursing student must have good caring behavior. However, the results of this study do not directly support the concept.

Differences in students' perceptions of the concept of caring and decision making can also affect the quality of the answers given depending on the experience in the field of practice and the students' critical thinking skills in carrying out clinical practice. This study can still contribute to the context of nursing education, although the results obtained were not significant. The results of this study can be used as the results of data renewal in nursing research and an indicator that it is necessary to evaluate nursing education institutions, especially in nursing profession programs in integrating learning to improve the quality of caring and students' critical thinking skills in solving a problem.

Nursing students' decision-making has not shown a significant relationship with caring behavior. This indicates that there are fundamental weaknesses in the decision-making process carried out by students during clinical practice. One of the main factors in this condition is the limited ability to think critically. Nursing decision-making requires students to be able to evaluate information objectively, consider various alternative actions, and make the most appropriate decision based on data and patient needs. However, in practice, students tend to rely on recommendations from senior nurses without exploring other alternatives, as indicated by the highest score in the "Seeking Information or Options" category.

This tendency indicates a dependency that has the potential to hinder students' decision-making independence. On the other hand, the lowest score in the category of "seeking new,

unbiased information" indicates that some students consider the process of seeking additional information as troublesome. This indicates low student initiative to explore information more widely, which is likely influenced by limited self-confidence in assessing a source of information.

In addition, the lack of experience in the field of practice is also a significant obstacle. In undergoing clinical practice, students often face psychological pressures such as fear of making mistakes, fear of being judged negatively by supervisors, or lack of space to express themselves in decision making. This discomfort has an impact on students' low self-confidence to think independently and critically about the clinical situations they face.

The concept of caring learned by students also tends to be interpreted in terms of conceptual understanding only, not yet optimally implemented. Meanwhile, Caring is an important foundation in nursing practice that is closely related to the ability to make patient-centered decisions. Fero (2009) in (Ermawaty *et al.*, 2022) stated that good caring behavior can improve the quality of decision-making. However, in this study, this concept was not reflected significantly. These results are in line with research (Rababa & Al-Rawashdeh, 2021) which found that decision-making is more influenced by practical experience, educational level, and critical thinking skills, compared to affective aspects such as caring.

Thus, the weaknesses of nursing students in decision-making include low independence of thinking, limitations in seeking new information objectively, and the suboptimal meaning of caring in the context of clinical decision-making. Therefore, these results indicate the importance of the role of educational institutions in strengthening the integration between conceptual learning and applicable practical experiences. Students need to be facilitated to be active in case study activities, evidence-based decision-making, and critical thinking training in order to be able to develop critical and empathetic thinking competencies in a balanced manner.

Conclusion

Most nursing professional students show good caring quality. Gender and age factors have an influence on the quality of caring provided. Women tend to have higher empathy, and younger students have lower caring quality. The decision-making ability of nursing professional students is at a moderate to high level. However, there are a small number of students who are in the low category. This shows that decision-making ability has begun to form. However, it is still necessary to strengthen learning strategies that emphasize the development of case-based learning and critical thinking training during professional

education. To prepare nursing professional students to be more mature in making the right and responsible decisions. The relationship between caring and decision-making in nursing professional students shows weak and insignificant results. Caring behavior and decision-making cannot be considered as dominant factors that significantly influence the variables studied. So other factors are needed that may have a greater influence on the decision-making of nursing professional students.

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Conflict of Interest

Nothing conflict of interest was caused by this research

Data Availability Statement

The researcher guarantees the validity of all data from this study obtained through direct observation of respondents by the research team. All data is guaranteed to be confidential based on the applicable code of ethics.

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