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The Effect of Nursing Students' Liking of Children and Attitudes Toward Clinical Practice on Their Comfort and Worry Levels in the Pediatric Clinic

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted as a descriptive and cross-sectional study to determine the effects of nursing students' liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice on their comfort and worry levels in the pediatric clinic. The research was carried out with 270 nursing students who had already taken or were taking the child health and diseases nursing course. Data were collected using a Nursing Student Information Form, the Barnett Liking of Children Scale, the Nursing Students' Attitudes toward Clinical Practices Scale, and the Pediatric Nursing Student Clinical Comfort and Worry Assessment Tool. Mean values, percentage calculations, and linear regression analysis were used for the analysis of the research data. Participants' mean scores were 52.30 ± 6.16 on the Barnett Liking of Children Scale, 103.72 ± 19.35 on the Nursing Students' Attitudes toward Clinical Practices Scale, 15.61 ± 3.74 on the comfort sub-dimension, and 11.63 ± 4.32 on the worry sub-dimension of the Pediatric Nursing Student Clinical Comfort and Worry Assessment Tool. It was determined that the liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice explained 43.6% of the clinical comfort level of pediatric nursing students in Model 1 and 45.2% of their clinical worry level in Model 2. It was determined that the liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice significantly affected the comfort and worry levels of nursing students in the pediatric clinic.

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Introduction

Love is defined as all positive and good feelings that draw people closer to each other. Human beings need this feeling at every stage of their life. Liking a child is one of the most admissible forms of unrequited love. Children, in particular, need love for gaining a basic sense of trust and complete and harmonious personality development (Hockenberry et al., 2021). It is also an important need for children to receive love from pediatric nurses, especially in cases of illness and hospitalization. The first and most important step in deciding to become a pediatric nurse is to liking of children (Hockenberry et al., 2021).

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Significant difficulties may arise when pediatric nurses lack the enjoyment of actually working with children. Pediatric nurses who like children can be more enthusiastic about performing their professional roles, such as taking children and their families to the healthcare center, providing the best care, and protecting children's rights (Akdoğan & Uysal, 2021; Çalışır et al., 2020). Moreover, they can better engage in intimate communication with children, enjoy spending time with them, and are more respectful, tolerant, and caring toward them. Provided that the nurses like children, their satisfaction and happiness with their occupation increase, as well as the satisfaction and happiness the children and families derive from the care they receive. On the other hand, nurses who do not like children may experience difficulties in providing care and performing their roles (Çalışır et al., 2020; Dafogianni et al., 2015). According to the literature, the status of liking of children is affected by variables, such as age, gender, marital status, number of siblings, having children, family structure, democratic family attitudes, childcare status, playing games with children, and willingness to work in pediatric clinics. Another important factor is applied education given in pediatric clinics (Akgün Kostak, 2013; Altay & Kılıçarslan Törüner, 2014; Erdem & Duyan, 2011). While working with children in pediatric clinics, students experience both good and negative emotions, including anger, fear, tension, and helplessness. On the one hand, they feel positive emotions like hope, love, trust, and happiness (Altay & Kılıçarslan Törüner, 2014). Positive emotions increase students' motivation, learning ability, and the sense of comfort they feel in clinical practice (Altay & Kılıçarslan Törüner, 2014). However, it has been stated that negative emotions decrease the willingness to learn and provide care and increase clinical worry. Students' level of liking for children reduces these negative attitudes considerably (Altay & Kılıçarslan Törüner, 2014).

Clinical practice in nursing education allows the transition from student life to professional life and the transfer of knowledge to practice (Biçer et al., 2015). In clinical practice, students are expected to gain proficiency in using knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and attitudes related to their profession (Karaöz, 2013). Students' feelings, thoughts, and attitudes regarding clinical practice can cause various effects on the development of both their personal and professional identities (Karaöz, 2013). In the literature, it has been stated that nursing students' positive attitudes toward clinical practices increase knowledge and skills, improve communication skills, raise self-confidence, develop a sense of responsibility and care experiences, and help adapt to teamwork (Başaran, 2020; Dikmen Aydin et al., 2017; Polat et al., 2017).

Both theoretical education and clinical practice are carried out together in nursing education (Facione et al., 2017). Clinical practice is an integral part of theoretical education and enables students to gain practical skills (Moghaddam et al., 2020). Although clinical practice is important for the development of students' professional knowledge and skills, it is also an important source of stress (Mikkonen et al., 2020). They experience worry and stress due to care of the sick individual, inadequate mentor support, lack of role models, negative relationships with healthcare professionals in the clinic (Tuomikoski et al., 2020), inadequate knowledge and skills for practice, low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, fear of failure, time management problems, fear of encountering negative reactions, and an inappropriate clinical environment (Başaran, 2020; Dikmen Aydin et al., 2017; Polat et al., 2017). In the clinical practice of the pediatric nursing course, the practice-related stress and worry experienced by students prevent the appropriate development of clinical skills and threaten their success (Arslan et al., 2018; Lassche et al., 2013). According to nursing

students, the pediatric clinical experience can be a source of high stress and worry (La Sala et al., 2019; Lassche et al., 2013).

Nursing education curriculum in Turkey is formed according to the Nursing National Core Education Program. In this program, it is aimed to create a pediatric nurse in a way to teach the role, duties, authorities and responsibilities of a pediatric nurse and to provide good care for the teaching of the Child Health and Diseases Nursing course (Derneği, 2014). In nursing education in Turkey, all third-year nursing students take the child health and diseases nursing course in the form of theoretical and practical training. Practical training of this course is carried out in pediatric units (Derneği, 2014). In this process, students may experience anxiety related to applied education in pediatric units and their anxiety levels are affected by many factors. Studies have shown that the care given by nursing students and pediatric nurses is related to the level of liking of children (Akgün Kostak, 2013; Altay & Kılıçarslan Törüner, 2014; Bektas et al., 2014; Erdem & Duyan, 2011). The clinical comfort and worry levels of nurses working in pediatric clinics are also affected by their liking of children, communication skills, empathy skills, and professional satisfaction (Akgün Kostak, 2013; Çalışır et al., 2020; Karaca et al., 2017). However, in our country, there is not enough research into the effects of nursing students' liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice on the level of their comfort and worry in the pediatric clinic (Karaca et al., 2017; Sarılioğlu & Köse, 2022). Reflecting on this, the present research was conducted to determine the effect of nursing students' liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice on their comfort and worry levels in the pediatric clinic, to contribute to the literature on the topic, and to guide nursing educators.

Research questions

- (1) What are the mean scores of nursing students on the liking of children, attitudes toward clinical practice, and comfort and worry levels in the pediatric clinic?
- (2) How does the liking of children and their attitudes toward clinical practice by nursing students affect comfort and worry levels in the pediatric clinic?

Methods

Study design

A descriptive and cross-sectional research design was used.

Sample

The research was carried out with nursing students at the nursing departments of four universities in three regions of Turkey between February and April 2023. The sample size required for the regression analysis in the study was calculated as 68 subjects on the GPOWER 3.0 statistical analysis software, based on a significance level of 0.05, a power value of 80%, and an effect size of 0.15 (medium effect size). The study consisted of 270 nursing students who were aged >18, had already taken or were taking the child health and diseases nursing course, were doing clinical practice in pediatric clinics, and volunteered to

participate in the research. The participation rate and the scale filling rate of the study were 100%.

Data collection tools

Nursing student information form

This form, which was created by the researchers following a review of the literature, consists of 10 questions about age, gender, school year, presence of siblings, family type, marital status, economic level, childhood environment, experience with looking after children, childhood life, knowledge of children's games, liking to play with children, willingness to work as a pediatric nurse, and willingness to have children in the future (Akgün Kostak, 2013; Bektas et al., 2014; Erdem & Duyan, 2011; Hendekci, 2020; Kabaklı Çimen, 2015; Kaya et al., 2016; Yilmaz et al., 2022).

The Barnett Liking of Children Scale (BLCS)

This scale was developed by Barnett and Sinisi to measure individuals' attitudes toward children (Barnett & Sinisi, 2011). The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was performed by Duyan and Gelbal (2010). The scale has 14 items and a seven-point Likert-type structure with evaluation options ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "7 = strongly agree". The 3rd, 6th, 10th, and 13th items of the scale are reverse scored. Total scores on the scale vary between 14 and 98 (14–38, low; 39–74, moderate; 75–98, high level of liking of children). The higher the total score is, the higher the level of people's liking of children is. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.92 and the test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.85 (Duyan & Gelbal, 2010). The alpha value of the scale was found as 0.89 in this study.

The Nursing Students' Attitudes towards Clinical Practices Scale (NS-ACPS)

This is a five-point Likert-type scale developed by Uysal and Yeşil Bayülgen (2022) to reveal the attitudes of nursing students toward clinical practices. Each item on the scale is scored using the following options: "strongly disagree (1 point)," "disagree (2 points)," "undecided (3 points)," "agree (4 points)," and "strongly agree (5 points)." The scale consists of four sub-dimensions: beliefs and expectations toward clinical practice (items 1–8); positive approach toward clinical practice (items 13–18, 23); negative approach toward clinical practice (items 9–12, 22, 24, and 25); personal development (items 19–21, 26). Items 9–12, 22, 24, and 25 are reverse coded. Scores on the scale range from 26 to 130, and an increase in the total score shows that the student has developed positive attitudes toward clinical practice. Cronbach's alpha value is 0.93 for the total scale and varies between 0.78 and 0.91 for the sub-dimensions (Uysal & Yeşil Bayülgen, 2022). In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found as 0.88 for the total scale and between 0.81 and 0.89 for the sub-dimensions.

The Pediatric Nursing Student Clinical Comfort and Worry Assessment Tool (PNS-CCWAT)

This scale was developed by Al-Qaaydeh and Lassche Macintosh to determine the comfort and worry levels of nursing students who were admitted to the pediatric clinic for the first time (Al-Qaaydeh et al., 2012). The Turkish validity and reliability study of

the scale was conducted by Arslan et al. in 2018. The scale consists of a total of 11 questions, six of which are used to determine the comfort level of students during pediatric clinic practice and five are used to identify the level of worry. It is a four-point Likert-type scale with the following response options: “strongly agree (1 point),” “agree (2 points),” “disagree (3 points),” and “strongly disagree (4 points).” Items three and five of the “comfort” sub-dimension of the scale are reverse coded. The reliability coefficient for the total scale was not given, but Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions were presented separately. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was found as 0.68 for the “comfort” sub-dimension and 0.89 for the “worry” sub-dimension (Arslan et al., 2018). In this study, the alpha value was found as 0.76 for the “comfort” sub-dimension and 0.88 for the “worry” sub-dimension.

Data collection

Data collection tools were applied to the students who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and delivered written consent at the universities where the research would be conducted. Due to the impact of the Kahramanmaraş-centered earthquake disaster in our country on the education process, the questionnaires were applied online via a form created on Google Forms. The link to the online questionnaire was sent to the students, and on the first page, they were asked whether they would consent to participate in the study. The questionnaire was applied to students who accepted to participate in the research.

Variables of the study

The independent variables of the study are mean scores on the “Barnett Liking of Children Scale” and the “Nursing Students’ Attitudes toward Clinical Practices Scale”.

The dependent variable is the mean score of the “Pediatric Nursing Student Clinical Comfort and Worry Assessment Tool.”

Ethical considerations

Before the research was initiated, permission of the owners of the scales to be used in the research was obtained via e-mail. To carry out the research, the ethical approval of the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of a university (date: 19.01.2023, no: 5) and institutional permissions of the faculty management of four universities were obtained. Participants were informed about the research via the online form and that they would be allowed to withdraw from the study without giving any reason. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Statistical analysis

SPSS version 25.0 (IBM Corp) software was used for the analysis of the data. Descriptive data were presented using mean and percentage calculations. The predictive power of students’ liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice on their clinical comfort and worry levels was determined by linear regression analysis, and variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance analysis were utilized to test the presence of

multicollinearity between students' liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice and their clinical comfort and worry levels. The significance level was accepted as 0.05.

Results

The mean age of the students in the study was 22.00 ± 1.65 years, 66.7% of them were female, and 33.3% were male. The descriptive characteristics of the nursing students participating in the study are presented in Table 1.

The mean "BLCS" score of the students in the study was 52.30 ± 6.16 . Their mean scores on the total "NS-ACPS" and "beliefs and expectations," "positive approach," "negative approach," and "personal development" sub-dimensions were 103.72 ± 19.35 , 35.33 ± 6.22 , 23.75 ± 7.20 , 28.38 ± 7.47 , and 16.25 ± 3.60 , respectively. The mean scores of the students on the "comfort" and "worry" sub-dimensions of the "PNS-CCWAT" were 15.61 ± 3.74 and 11.63 ± 4.32 , respectively (Table 2).

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of the participants.

		Mean	SD
Age		22.00	1.65
Number of siblings		2.83	0.44
		n	%
Gender	Female	180	66.7
	Male	90	33.3
School year	3	128	47.4
	4	142	52.6
Family type	Core	212	78.5
	Extended	49	18.1
	Broken	9	3.4
Marital status	Single	261	96.7
	Married	9	3.3
Perceived family income	Good	25	9.3
	Middle	206	76.3
	Poor	39	14.4
Childhood environment	Family	246	91.1
	Single parent	14	5.2
	Boarding school/child welfare institution	10	3.7
Brothers/Sisters	Yes	243	90
	No	27	10
Perceived childhood life	Very good	31	11.5
	Good	118	43.7
	Moderate	105	38.9
	Poor	16	5.9
Experience with looking after children	Yes	137	50.7
	No	133	49.3
Knowledge of children's games	Yes	218	80.7
	No	52	19.3
The status of liking to play with children	Yes	197	73
	No	73	27
Perceived ability to communicate with children	Good	128	47.4
	Moderate	126	46.7
	Poor	16	5.9
Willingness to have children	Yes	228	84.4
	No	42	15.6
Willingness to work as a nurse in a pediatric clinic	Yes	109	40.4
	No	161	59.6

SD: Standard deviation.

Table 2. Mean scores of scales used in the study.

Scales	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
The Barnett Liking of Children Scale	36.00	74.00	52.30	6.16
The Nursing Students' Attitudes toward Clinical Practices Scale	32.00	130.00	103.72	19.35
Sub-scales				
Beliefs and Expectations	8.00	40.00	35.33	6.22
Positive Approach	7.00	35.00	23.75	7.20
Negative Approach	7.00	35.00	28.38	7.47
Personal Development	4.00	20.00	16.25	3.60
The Pediatric Nursing Student Clinical Comfort and Worry Assessment Tool	6.00	24.00	15.61	3.74
Comfort Sub-scale				
The Pediatric Nursing Student Clinical Comfort and Worry Assessment Tool	5.00	20.00	11.63	4.32
Worry Sub-scale				

SD: Standard deviation.

Table 3. The predictive power of nursing students' liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice on their comfort and worry levels in the pediatric clinic.

Variables	Model 1					Model 2				
	PNS-CCWAT Comfort Sub-scale					PNS-CCWAT Worry Sub-scale				
	B	SE	β	t	p	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	84.541	4.361		16.433	.000	88.571	5.321		17.123	.000
BLCS	0.404	0.049	0.261	8.289	.010	-0.281	0.123	-0.262	2.281	.025
S-ACPS	0.135	0.062	0.078	2.182	.029	-0.246	0.103	-0.238	2.393	.019
NS-ACPS Beliefs and Expectations	0.360	0.047	0.293	7.653	.004	-0.492	0.242	-0.248	2.283	.045
NS-ACPS Positive Approach	0.187	0.080	0.079	2.330	.020	-0.242	0.112	-0.268	2.182	.015
NS-ACPS Negative Approach	-0.178	0.098	-0.121	2.420	.012	0.296	0.128	0.216	2.468	.022
NS-ACPS Personal Development	0.260	0.027	0.191	6.663	.002	-0.238	0.112	-0.218	2.313	.024
R	0.580					0.646				
R ²	0.436					0.452				
F	45.081					21.745				
P	0.000					0.000				
Durbin Watson (1.5–2.5)	1.850					1.860				

B: Unstandardized Beta; SE: Standard Error; β: Standardized Beta β; R: Correlation; R²: Correlation Coefficient (Explained Variance Rate); F: Model Statistic; t: Significance Test of Regression Line p: Significance Level.

BLCS: The Barnett Liking of Children Scale; NS-ACPS: The Nursing Students' Attitudes toward Clinical Practices Scale; PNS-CCWAT: The Pediatric Nursing Student Clinical Comfort and Worry Assessment Tool.

Two models were established between “BLCS” and “NS-ACPS” and “PNS-CCWAT” with multiple regression analysis. In Model 1, which was created according to the relationship between the variables, an increase in the mean liking of children and attitude toward clinical practice scores increased students' comfort levels. In addition, an increase in the mean negative attitudes toward clinical practice scores decreased the level of comfort. In Model 1, the liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice explained 43.6% of the clinical comfort level of pediatric nursing students and significantly affected it ($p < .001$, Table 3).

In Model 2, an increase in the mean liking of children and attitude toward clinical practice scores decreased students' worry levels. In addition, an increase in the mean negative attitudes toward clinical practice scores increased the worry levels. In Model 2, it was found that the liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice explained 45.2% of the clinical worry level of pediatric nursing students and significantly affected it ($p < .001$, Table 3).

Discussion

Nursing is a profession in which professional knowledge and skills are gained through theoretical and practical education. While students transform the knowledge they gain theoretically into skills in practice environments, they can also be exposed to many stress factors (La Sala et al., 2019). Students who take the pediatric nursing course may experience intense stress when they encounter a sick child for the first time in clinical practice. In the literature, it has been emphasized that nursing students experience intense stress due to reasons, such as difficulty communicating with the child, touching the baby, parent-centered care, and applying invasive interventions to the child, especially in pediatric nursing practices (Çalışır et al., 2020; Karaca & Açıkgöz, 2018). This can negatively affect their learning process and reduce their clinical performance. For this reason, it is crucial to determine the conditions that affect students' worry levels. Reducing students' stress in pediatric clinics plays a critical role in increasing the success of their care (Lassche et al., 2013). Considering that clinical practice is an indispensable part of nursing education, it is very important to reveal the factors affecting students' comfort and worry levels in pediatric clinics in terms of planning interventional studies (Akgün Kostak, 2013; Al-Qaaydeh et al., 2012, Altay and Kılıçarslan Törüner, 2014; Bektas et al., 2014; Erdem & Duyan, 2011). Considering the existing literature, although nursing students' liking of children, attitudes toward clinical practice, and comfort and worry levels in the pediatric clinic have been investigated as separate variables (Altay and Kılıçarslan Törüner, 2014; Başaran, 2020; Bektas et al., 2014; Karaca & Açıkgöz, 2018; Lassche et al., 2013; Polat et al., 2017; Top et al., 2020). This is the first study to examine all three variables together, which makes the study important.

The mean "BLCS" score of the students in the study was 52.30 ± 6.16 (Table 2). In the literature, the mean score of this scale was found as follows: 87.58 ± 14.13 in Akgün Kostak et al. (2017); 83.15 ± 15.28 in Baran and Yılmaz (2019); 68.60 ± 7.90 in Ardahan Akgül et al. (2021); 80.67 ± 15.11 in Yılmaz and Akay (2022) (Akgün Kostak et al., 2017; Ardahan Akgül et al., 2021; Baran & Yılmaz, 2019; Yılmaz & Akay, 2022). The reason for the low mean scores of the students participating in this study was that 49.3% of the students had no experience of looking after children, 27% did not like to play with children, 46.7% thought that their communication skills with children were at a moderate level, or 59.6% not wanting to willingness to work as a nurse in a pediatric clinic. It is thought that this may be because nursing students do not want to work as a nurse in pediatric clinic (Table 1).

The mean "NS-ACPS" score of the students in the study was 103.72 ± 19.35 (Table 2). When the studies in the literature were examined, it was seen that studies conducted using "NS-ACPS" were limited, but students reported negative opinions about clinical practice due to reasons, such as negative attitudes of teaching staff, lack of teamwork, and harsh working conditions (Öner and Karabudak, 2021; Özsaban and Bayram, 2020). Considering that the maximum score obtained from this scale is 130, it is thought that students participating in the study had positive attitudes toward clinical practice. Reasons, such as instructors' approach, students' awareness of the professional importance of clinical practice, and the willingness to develop invasive nursing skills, may have enabled students to have positive attitudes toward clinical practice.

Students' mean scores on the comfort and worry sub-dimensions of the "PNS-CCWAT" were 15.61 ± 3.74 and 11.63 ± 4.32 , respectively (Table 2). The mean scores of these sub-

dimensions in studies in the literature were 14.64 ± 2.38 for the comfort sub-dimension and 11.72 ± 2.69 for the worry sub-dimension in the study of Top and Kulakaç (2020) (Top et al., 2020). In another study, the mean comfort score was 18.01 ± 2.06 , and the mean worry score was 12.98 ± 2.84 (Mutlu et al., 2020). The mean scores of the students in our study are similar to those of the literature. It is thought that the high worry scores may be due to the fact that 40.4% of the students participating in the study preferred not to work in pediatric clinics.

When the findings were examined in terms of the models we created in our study, it was seen in Model 1 that the liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practices explained 43.6% of the clinical comfort level of pediatric nursing students, and the increase in the mean scores of liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice increased students' comfort levels ($p < .001$; Table 3). In Model 2, it was determined that the liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice explained 45.2% of the clinical worry level of pediatric nursing students, and the increase in the mean liking of children and attitude toward clinical practice scores decreased their worry levels ($p < .001$; Table 3). Mutlu et al. (2020) found that nursing students developed negative attitudes toward practice and experienced worry due to the lack of knowledge and practice. In a different study, it was stated that nursing students developed negative attitudes toward practice and were more worried due to the differences in the growth and development of children, difficulties understanding the explanations about procedures, limited communication skills, and differences in the techniques applied to children from those of adults (da Silva et al., 2015). Clinical practices play an important role in the professional life of nursing students (Mikkonen et al., 2020; Tuomikoski et al., 2020). In many studies, it has been emphasized that students' positive attitudes toward clinical practice are significant factors to make them feel comfortable in the clinic (Hsu et al., 2018; Jack et al., 2018; Karaca & Açıkgöz, 2018; Kol and İnce, 2018). Another factor affecting students' pediatric clinical performance and the stress and worry they experience regarding practice is their level of liking of children. Some studies in the literature have emphasized that students with high mean scores on the liking of children scale cope with the worry they experience in the pediatric clinic more easily (Altay and Kılıçarslan Törüner, 2014; Çunkuş et al., 2021; Dousis et al., 2022; Sarıalioglu & Köse, 2022). In a different study, it was determined that there was a significant relationship between the state of liking of children and clinical comfort and worry (Mutlu et al., 2020). In another study, it was stated that the high level of pediatric nursing students' liking for children and their willingness was effective in increasing the level of comfort in the clinical practice environment (Dafogianni et al., 2015). There is no study in the literature on the examination of all three variables together. For this reason, it is thought that this is a significant study showing the predictive power of liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice on the clinical comfort level of pediatric nursing students. The findings in the literature support the findings in Models 1 and 2.

Study limitations

Although the inclusion of four universities in Turkey in the study is the strength of the study, the use of random sampling and the participation of only volunteer students may have affected the generalization of the research results. In addition, this study showed that the liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice had a significant effect on students' comfort and

worry levels in the pediatric clinic; however, it should not be forgotten that these variables may also be affected by familial, environmental, cultural, social, and occupational factors.

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, it was determined that the liking of children and attitudes toward clinical practice had a significant effect on the comfort and worry levels of nursing students in the pediatric clinic. It is recommended to repeat the study with a larger sample to determine other factors affecting the level of comfort and worry in the pediatric clinic. In addition, it may be recommended to examine other familial, environmental, cultural, social, and occupational factors that may affect the level of comfort and worry in the pediatric clinic. It is also recommended to conduct qualitative research on the pediatric clinical experiences or perceptions of nursing students.

One of the places where the level of clinical worry is the highest during nursing education is pediatric units. Students in pediatric units may get worried due to many factors, such as administering medication to the child, giving support during painful procedures, and the fear of harming the child. The level of students' liking of children and their attitudes toward clinical practice is important in terms of reducing this worry. For this reason, it is recommended to include topics such as the liking of children and therapeutic play in the undergraduate/graduate curriculum of nursing education.

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Ethical statement

To carry out the research, the ethical approval of the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of a university (date: 19.01.2023, no: 5) and institutional permissions of the faculty management of four universities were obtained.

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