

**Attitudes Toward Older People Among Nursing Students in Southeast Asia Countries:
A Narrative Review****I Gede Putu Darma Suyasa^{1*}, Ni Luh Putu Inca Buntari Agustini¹, Ni Kadek Sutini¹,
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Keywords :Aged, Attitude, Nursing Students,
Southeast Asia.**Abstract**

The rapid growth of the older population worldwide has had significant consequences in the health care system, especially in preparing prospective nurses as health workers with positive attitudes towards older people. Unfortunately, students' attitudes have been reported to vary from positive attitudes to indications of ageism towards the older age group. This study aimed to identify and describe current findings regarding nursing students' attitudes toward older people in Southeast Asian countries. This study was conducted using a narrative review approach. The literature was sourced from international databases: PubMed, Science Direct, EBSCOhost, and ProQuest. Keywords included "attitude" AND "older people" OR "elderly" OR "older Adult" AND "nursing student". A total of 154 articles were found and there were 7 articles that met the inclusion criteria from five Southeast Asian countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, and Vietnam. In general, nursing students in the five Southeast Asian countries have positive attitudes toward elderly health and are highly willing to become elderly nurses as their future career. The attitudes toward older people among nursing students are associated with the level of nursing students' knowledge about older people's health, subjective norms towards older people, perceived behavioral control, good intentions, having learning experiences with project-based learning about older people's health on campus, and having experience caring for older people during the education process. Incorporating more comprehensive Gerontic nursing content into the nursing education curriculum, including theoretical knowledge and direct practice opportunities, is imperative to increase students' positive attitude toward older people.

INTRODUCTION

The growth of the older population is a global phenomenon that also occurs in Southeast Asia. The World Health Organization reports that the older population is increasing rapidly throughout the Southeast Asia Region, where the proportion of the age group 60 years and above is expected to grow from 12.2% in 2024 to 22.9% in 2050 (WHO, 2025). The active aging process is a challenging issue in ASEAN countries. Predictors related to older people's health problems in ASEAN include elderly-friendly environments, lifestyle, and socio-economic factors (Tiraphat et al., 2021). However, older people with a long life are not always accompanied by good health; older people may experience poor health and require long-term care (WHO, 2025). Many studies have been conducted and found that the health of older people and their quality of care received are greatly influenced by the attitudes of nurses and require improvement in the higher education curriculum in the field of gerontology to

introduce early on the attitudes of nursing students towards the health of older people and how they will be able to provide good care (Chance et al., 2021)

The increasing number of older people should be accompanied by the number of nurses who can care for older people with a positive attitude and provide good-quality care (López-Hernández et al., 2021). Universities where nursing students face unique challenges and opportunities to develop their abilities and future careers in contributing to quality health care in various elderly health care service facilities (King et al., 2013). Nursing students as prospective health workers play an essential role in providing services to older people in the future. Unfortunately, several studies have shown that the attitudes of nursing students towards older people still vary, ranging from positive attitudes to indications of ageism or prejudice against the older age group. Not all nursing students have a positive attitude towards the health of older people and are interested in caring for older people. This is the starting point for developing an intervention that helps change their attitudes towards older people and their health problems (Fernandes et al., 2018)

Nursing students as future health workers have great potential in preparing quality care for older people. Nursing students' knowledge and attitudes about aging can affect their readiness for future health care for older people. Universities where higher education in nursing is challenged to prepare future nurses who can provide complex and quality nursing care services for older people (Castro et al., 2023). Nursing students' attitudes towards older people can affect their attitudes towards nursing services and the quality of care services in the future (Fu et al., 2022)

The rapid growth of the older population in Southeast Asia has had significant consequences for the health care system, especially in preparing future nurses as health workers who have competence and positive attitudes towards older people. Nursing students as prospective nurses have a strategic role in providing holistic services to older people in the community (Cheng et al., 2022). This narrative review is essential to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of nursing students' attitudes in the region, which can later be used as a basis for formulating more contextual and evidence-based Gerontic nursing education and training policies.

This study aimed to identify, synthesize, and analyze current findings on nursing students' attitudes towards older people in Southeast Asian countries. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of nursing education curricula, strategies for improving students' competence and empathy towards older people, and become an essential basis in efforts to prepare nursing personnel who are responsive to the challenges of an aging population in the Southeast Asian region.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a narrative review design to identify and describe attitudes toward older people among nursing students in Southeast Asia Countries. The narrative review method approach was carried out to comprehensively and thoroughly describe the attitudes of nursing students towards the elderly in Southeast Asian countries, without limiting them to a particular type of research. This method allows for the integration of findings from diverse literatures to identify common patterns and factors that influence the attitudes of nursing students towards the elderly in Southeast Asian countries. Narrative review is conducted in five steps (Sukhera, 2022) which include 1) *Study question*: how are the attitudes toward older people among nursing students in Southeast Asia Countries?. 2) *Topic coverage*: Various attitudes toward older people among nursing students in Southeast Asia Countries. 3) *Literature search*: A literature search was conducted on the international databases PubMed, Science Direct, EBSCOhost, and ProQuest using the keywords "attitude" AND "older people" OR "elderly" OR "older adult" AND "nursing student" 4) *Literature*

selection: Literature selection was conducted non-systematically by identifying and selecting relevant literature to answer the objectives of this study. The literature chosen was that which met the inclusion criteria of the article: research on the population of nursing students in the Southeast Asia region, which included nursing students in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia. Research articles have been published in scientific journals from 2020 to 2025, and present various attitudes toward older people among nursing students from several Southeast Asian countries.5) *Data analysis:* Data analysis was carried out descriptively by going through data extraction stages based on the researcher's name and year of research, research area, research design, sample size, and research results.

RESULT

A total of 154 articles were found, from the PubMed = 6, Science Direct = 108, EBSCOhost = 13, and ProQuest = 27. There were 7 articles that met the inclusion criteria were chosen for this study. Out of ten countries in Southeast Asia, only five countries have had research in this field and have been involved in the objectives of this study: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam. One research article was conducted on nursing students in Vietnam, 2 research articles were conducted on nursing students in Thailand, 1 research article was conducted on nursing students in Malaysia, 1 research article was conducted on nursing students in the Philippines with other countries that are not Southeast Asia, 1 research article was conducted on nursing students in Indonesia, and 1 research article was conducted on nursing students in Indonesia and the Philippines in one study.

Table 1.
Research articles on attitudes toward older people among nursing students in Southeast Asia Countries.

| No | Researcher (Year) | Country of Research | Research Design and Sample Size | Research Findings |
|----|--------------------------|---------------------|---|--|
| 1 | (Thuong et al., 2025) | Vietnam | Design: A descriptive cross-sectional Sample: 222 nursing students | There is a significant relationship between nursing students' knowledge of the elderly and their willingness to care for them. Additionally, a strong link was observed between students' positive attitudes toward older adults and their readiness to provide care |
| 2 | (Adulyarat et al., 2024) | Thailand | Design: A cross-sectional survey Sample: 412 nursing students | A meaningful association exists between attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and nursing students' intentions to provide care for older adults |
| 3 | (Ismail et al., 2023) | Malaysia | Design: A cross-sectional survey | Most nursing students demonstrate favorable attitudes toward caring for the elderly. |

| No | Researcher (Year) | Country of Research | Research Design and Sample Size | Research Findings |
|----|-----------------------------|---|--|--|
| | | | Sample: 107 nursing students | |
| 4 | (Cheng et al., 2022) | China, Chile, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Greece, the State of Palestine (henceforth Palestine), the Philippines , and Saudi Arabia | Design: a multi-country survey Sample: 2250 nursing students | Nursing students from five countries including Mainland China, Greece, Hong Kong, Palestine, and Saudi Arabia indicated that caring for older adults was among their least favored career options. In contrast, students from Chile, India, and the Philippines showed a significantly greater interest in pursuing geriatric nursing. Conversely, students in Egypt and Greece were less inclined to select this career path. |
| 5 | (Acob et al., 2022) | Filipina dan Indonesia | Design: cross-sectional design Sample: 460 nursing students | In general, nursing students from the Philippines and Indonesia have a supportive attitude towards elderly care. Statistical findings indicate that nursing students in the Philippines demonstrate a comparatively more supportive attitude. |
| 6 | (Hanklang & Sivasan, 2021) | Thailand | Design: a quasi-experimental Sample: 95 nursing students | Nursing students who receive project-based learning about older people have the ability to provide higher quality nursing care to older people in the community. |
| 7 | (Aisy Sunaryo et al., 2020) | Indonesia | Design: a cross-sectional design Sample: 334 nursing students | Nursing students' knowledge levels regarding dementia care for older adults were significantly associated with their age, academic level, and prior experience in caring for elderly individuals with dementia. However, only age showed a significant correlation with their attitudes toward providing such care |

Table 1 shows that nursing students in Southeast Asia **Countries**, especially Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam have good and positive attitudes toward older people. Students in several Southeast Asian countries have positive attitudes toward elderly

health and are highly willing to become elderly nurses as their future career. The attitudes toward older people among nursing students are associated with the level of nursing students' knowledge about older people's health, subjective norms towards older people, perceived behavioral control, good intentions, having learning experiences with project-based learning about older people's health on campus, and having experience caring for older people during the education process.

DISCUSSION

Although coming from different countries and cultures in Southeast Asia, this study found that nursing students in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam, generally have positive attitudes towards older people. This finding is vital considering that there is an increase in the number of older people in the region who need nursing staff ready and willing to provide friendly health services to older people. Nursing students in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam show respect, empathy, and high interest in elderly care, which is reflected in their desire to make geriatric nursing a career choice. This positive attitude does not arise by chance. Still, it is formed through the interaction of various internal and external factors during higher education in nursing at universities and the influence of the socio-cultural environment in the country.

Students with a good understanding of the aging process and the health needs of older people tend to have more positive attitudes. This suggests that increasing gerontological literacy in nursing education plays a vital role in shaping attitudes. Increasing knowledge about older people's health is essential in nursing education. The tremendous global burden of a rapidly aging population requires more excellent nursing education and training specializing in geriatrics (Cheng et al., 2022). The strong association between the level of knowledge and nursing students' attitudes towards older people's health should be a consideration for incorporating more comprehensive geriatric content into the nursing education curriculum, including theoretical knowledge and direct practice opportunities with elderly patients (Thuong et al., 2025).

Nursing students' positive attitudes towards older people closely relate to their intentions to work in Gerontic nursing. This intention is influenced by their perception of human values, positive experiences during education, and the view that caring for older people is a meaningful form of devotion. The traditional culture in society that is devoted to parents and respects older people has impacted the birth of positive attitudes of nursing students as the next generation through intergenerational support from the family. All forms of support, from children to older people, greatly help older people achieve a positive identity in their lives (Yu & Wang, 2023). Positive attitudes in nursing students can be formed from the beginning of their studies, and positive attitudes can increase after clinical placements where students have interacted with older people. Still, ageist attitudes towards older people can also be unavoidable. Before clinical placement in the geriatric field, the curriculum of theoretical courses is vital to consider in order to improve positive attitudes in nursing students before they finally meet older people directly in clinical practice (Castellano-Rioja et al., 2022)

In Southeast Asian societies, cultural values that emphasize respect for older people and the role of children in caring for older people contribute to strong subjective norms. This encourages students to view elderly care not only as a job but as part of social and cultural responsibility. The value of intergenerational support continues to be highly valued by health

care professionals. They must respect this norm and help preserve the values by involving family members in care activities (Adulyarat et al., 2024; Setiyani et al., 2015)

Students who feel competent and confident in caring for older adults demonstrate more positive attitudes and intentions. This confidence is reinforced through hands-on learning and practice experiences during nursing education. Nursing students who have direct contact with older adults report increased positive perceptions of older adults, encounter ageist stereotypes of older adults as incapacitated, and have plans to develop an interest in a career in the elder care (Augustin & Freshman, 2016). Nursing students' interest in caring for older adults in nursing homes is critical to prepare them not only to be able to provide clinical skills but also to be able to play a leadership and oversight role in the health of older adults in the unit (King et al., 2013). Several nursing educational institutions in Southeast Asia have implemented project-based learning that involves students in community activities for health services. This approach has been proven to build students' practical understanding, empathy, and emotional attachment to older people. Project-Based Learning provides direct opportunities for nursing students to explore and discover knowledge about elderly health to better approach and care for older people in the community. They are ready for the future world of work related to elderly care (Hanklang & Sivasan, 2021). Introducing clinical practice and geriatric education at an early stage is essential to guarantee that older adults receive high-quality and effective care in the future (Ismail et al., 2023). Universities that have nursing education programs should pay attention to nursing students' attitudes towards older people's health, strengthen educational methods related to older people's health, and build career development planning among nursing students to produce practical significance in meeting the health needs of older people in the community in the future (Fu et al., 2022). There is a need for better cooperation between several Southeast Asian countries to conduct benchmarking related to a better care education system for the needs of professional nurses for the global future (Acob et al., 2022)

The most essential factor in generating positive attitudes and knowledge of nursing students about older people is regular contact with grandparents, followed by progress in Gerontic nursing courses at the university (Castro et al., 2023). Direct experience of caring for older people, both in the family environment and during clinical practice in higher nursing education, is an essential factor in forming a realistic understanding and empathy for nursing students in understanding the condition of older people. This experience allows students to see older people more humanely, not just as patients. Nursing students who previously had experience living with grandparents or providing clinical care for older people showed a greater willingness to work in the geriatric nursing (Thuong et al., 2025). Living with older people relatives, having a close relationship with older people in the family, and having high social interaction with older people in daily life in the family and community are significant factors that influence nursing students' attitudes towards older people's care in the community (Setchoduk, 2015). Family and community have an essential role in instilling the preservation of a culture of caring for older people, especially among young people. Preserving a culture of care through educating the younger generation, accompanied by implementing laws and regulations on elderly health in the country, will ensure a better quality of life for older people (Felipec-Dimog et al., 2024)

This study has limitations, including the number of articles obtained from only five countries out of ten countries in Southeast Asia, so that the coverage of the countries obtained does not represent all of Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

Although they come from different countries and cultures in the Southeast Asian region, nursing students in five countries in the Southeast Asian region, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam, have positive attitudes towards older people and are willing to become Gerontic nurses as their future career. The attitudes toward older people among nursing students are associated with the level of good nursing students' knowledge about older people's health, subjective norms in society that respect parents and the older person, perceived behavioral control towards older person, good intentions, having learning experiences with project-based learning about older people's health on campus, and because they have direct experience caring for older people both in clinical practice during education and in daily life within the family and community. Developing a higher education curriculum for nursing in the field of Gerontic nursing that is more advanced and evidence-based is an exciting highlight that will continue to be developed in producing future nurses who are expected to provide better health services for older people.

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