

# A Qualitative Inquiry into the Lived Experiences of Fifth-Semester BSc Nursing Students Encountering Difficulties with Group Assignments at Renaissance University, School of Nursing, Indore

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**Abstract:** *This qualitative research explores the lived experiences of BSc Nursing 5th semester students facing challenges in group assignments. Using a phenomenological approach, data were collected through in - depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis and basic statistical representation. Findings highlight core challenges such as lack of coordination, unequal participation, time management issues, and academic pressure. Recommendations include structured group policies, mentorship, and conflict resolution training.*

**Keywords:** group assignments, nursing education, student challenges, academic pressure, phenomenological study

## 1. Background of the Study

Nursing education emphasizes both theoretical knowledge and practical application. Group assignments are a fundamental component of nursing curricula, promoting teamwork, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. However, many nursing students encounter significant struggles while engaging in group assignments. These challenges may arise due to interpersonal conflicts, unequal task distribution, lack of leadership, communication barriers, or time management issues. The 5th semester of the BSc Nursing program marks a critical phase in the academic journey of students, involving complex clinical postings, theoretical workload, and research exposure. Balancing these responsibilities alongside group assignments can lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout, impacting academic performance and learning outcomes.

## 2. Need for the Study

Nursing students are often expected to manage academic tasks within groups effectively. However, many face challenges such as lack of participation by group members, conflicting schedules, unclear roles, and stress due to peer pressure. Despite being a core part of collaborative learning, such group work can become a source of frustration rather than learning if not properly guided.

### Objectives:

- To explore the lived experiences of BSc Nursing 5th semester students regarding struggles with group assignments.
- To identify the common challenges faced by students during group assignments.
- To understand the coping strategies used by students to manage group - related difficulties.
- To suggest recommendations for educators to improve group assignment experiences.

### Research Questions

- What are the lived experiences of 5th semester BSc Nursing students in managing group assignments?
- What challenges do students face while working in groups?
- How do students cope with the struggles arising from group work?

### Delimitations

- The study is delimited to BSc Nursing 5th semester students only.
- The study will include participants from one selected nursing college in Indore.
- Only those students who have participated in group assignments during the current semester will be included.

### Assumptions

- BSc Nursing students have participated in group assignments during their 5th semester.
- Students have experienced challenges during group tasks.
- Participants will be honest and open while sharing their lived experiences.

### Limitations

The study is limited to a small number of participants hence findings may not be generalized.

## 3. Review of Literature

**Warren and Walker (2018)** found that students often experience anxiety and dissatisfaction when working in heterogeneous groups, particularly when roles are unclear or group members show varying levels of commitment.

**Lee & Lim (2019)** Numerous challenges have been reported by nursing students while completing group assignments. **Lee & Lim (2019)** highlighted the major problems as unequal workload sharing, poor communication, lack of time coordination, and unresolved interpersonal conflicts.

#### 4. Methodology

##### Research Design:

Phenomenological qualitative study.

##### Setting:

Nursing colleges in Indore.

##### Population:

BSc Nursing 5th semester students.

##### Sample Size:

12 participants selected using purposive sampling.

##### Data Collection Method:

Semi - structured, face - to - face interviews lasting 20–30 minutes.

##### Tool:

Interview guide with open - ended questions.

##### Inclusion Criteria:

- Willing students from 5th semester.
- Those who have completed at least 2 group assignments.

##### Exclusion Criteria:

- Students absent during group assignments.
- Unwilling to participate.

##### Data Analysis Procedure:

- 1) Transcription of audio - recorded interviews.
- 2) Coding of responses using NVivo/manual methods.
- 3) Thematic analysis to extract themes.
- 4) Descriptive statistics to represent frequency of themes.

##### Coding and Themes (Sample):

##### Open Coding:

- "I end up doing most of the work. "
- "We fight a lot over dividing topics. "
- "Some members don't even attend meetings. "
- "It's hard to find a common time to meet. "

##### Axial Coding:

- Unequal workload
- Communication barriers
- Lack of accountability
- Scheduling conflicts

##### Themes:

| Theme                    | Description                                                    |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Role Imbalance           | Disparity in task distribution and workload.                   |
| Communication Challenges | Difficulty in maintaining regular and effective communication. |
| Time management Issue    | Struggles in finding mutually aggregable time slots.           |
| Conflict and Stress      | Interpersonal tensions and academic stress.                    |

##### Statistical Analysis (Descriptive):

| Theme                    | No. of Participants Mentioned (n=12) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Role Imbalance           | 10                                   | 83.30%         |
| Communication Challenges | 9                                    | 75%            |
| Time Management Issues   | 8                                    | 66.60%         |
| Conflict and Stress      | 7                                    | 58.30%         |

##### Interpretation:

The majority of students reported unequal task distribution and poor communication as significant barriers. Scheduling conflicts and interpersonal stressors compounded the negative experience. The findings suggest the need for structured peer collaboration methods and guidance in group work.

##### Ethical Considerations:

- Ethical clearance obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee.
- Written informed consent from participants.
- Anonymity and confidentiality maintained throughout the study.

#### 5. Conclusion

Group assignments, though pedagogically valuable, can be challenging due to group dynamics. Nursing institutions should introduce structured collaboration frameworks, leadership roles, and peer evaluations to ensure fair participation and learning equity.

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