

# Students' Perceptions Regarding Clinical Practice: A Quasi-Experimental Metaphor Study

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to use metaphors to reveal students' perceptions of clinical practice and the change in their perceptions after starting practice.

**Methods:** The study's population consists of 98 students in the midwifery department of a health sciences faculty in Istanbul, and the sample consists of 86 students (87.75% of the population). The data of the study were obtained using the a student information form and the Clinical Practice Perception Form (CPPF) created by the authors. The CPPF asks the students to fill in the blanks for such phrases as "Clinical practice is like ... because ...", "Lecturer/research assistant/mentor in the clinic is like ... because ...", "Healthcare team members in the clinic are like ... because ...", "Patients are like ... because ..." before and after going into clinical practice. The study uses the descriptive analysis technique to analyze the completed metaphor statements.

**Results:** The students were observed to compare the clinic to the "school" the most before and after the clinical practice. The clinic's lecturer/research assistant/mentor was most likened to a "mother" before going into practice; after entering practice, they were determined to mostly compared it to "light." Before and after clinical practice, healthcare team members were most likened to "friends," and patients were most likened to a "flower."

**Conclusion:** The midwifery students were observed to have positive perceptions about clinical practice before and after their first clinical practice. The study allowed students' perceptions of clinical practice to be determined, as these constitute an important part of midwifery education. In this way, the study is thought to shed light on how to identify the deficiencies in clinical practice and how to arrange future training needs.

**Keywords:** Clinical practice, education, teacher, metaphor, midwifery student

## INTRODUCTION

Perception is the way individuals perceive events or situations and can affect life positively or negatively (1). During midwifery education, students gain a professional identity by developing perceptions about values and ethical behaviors. By having a positive perception of the profession, students are able to adapt to their profession more, and this is reflected in the quality of their midwifery care (2). For students, clinical practice is the starting place for recognizing, adapting to, and internalizing the profession. During clinical practice, students sometimes fail to show the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that are targeted. The reasons for this situation should be analyzed by the student, the teacher For this reason, students need to

express their perceptions about clinical practice, and one of the ways to detect perceptions is to conduct a metaphor study (3).

Metaphor studies are a type of research frequently used to determine the perceptions that occur in people during a process of change and to reveal an existing situation (4). The Oxford Learner's Dictionaries define metaphor as "a word or phrase used to describe somebody/something else, in a way that is different from its normal use, to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful" (5). In this context, metaphors can redefine and conceptualize situations and events as they are perceived. Metaphors can be used to explain things that are unknown or uncertain through things that are known and obvious (6-8).

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Midwifery education by its nature mainly includes practical training. Practical training is often carried out through simulation and clinical practices. Practical training environments accompanied by simulations are close to ideal environments and allow for many factors to be controlled. However, uncertainties occur more in clinical practice, and the perceptions, thoughts and experiences of midwife candidates who are just at the beginning of their education are critical. Students' perceptions of clinical practice will also affect their perspectives on the profession. No metaphor analysis in the literature is found to have examined midwifery students' perceptions toward clinical practice or how these perceptions change over time. The study aims to use metaphors to reveal midwifery students' perceptions toward clinical practice and the changes in their perceptions after starting practice. In line with this aim, the study will identify the issues related to clinical practice and develop suggestions for solutions. In this respect, the study is original in the field of midwifery.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Purpose and Type of Research

This research has been conducted using the phenomenological design, a qualitative research method, to reveal the perceptions of first-year midwifery students regarding clinical practice through metaphors.

### Population and Sampling

The sample consists of students who agreed to participate in the study and who met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria are: being a first-year student with no clinical experience (not having worked in a hospital before, not participating in the simulation study) and completing 13 weeks of the Basic Practices Simulation Training course for 4 hours per week. Due to the nature of qualitative research, the study was continued until data saturation was reached. In line with this, the study was completed with 86 students (82.7% of the population).

### Data Collection Tools

The study obtained its data using a student information form (SIF) and the Clinical Practice Perception Form (CPPF) the researchers had created in line with the literature. The SIF was also developed in line with the literature (9,10) and consists of a total of five questions about the participants' demographic and learning characteristics. The CPPF consists of questions for evaluating perceptions toward clinical practice using the metaphor method (6,7). This form has the participants fill in the blanks to such statements as "Clinical practice is like ... because ...", "Lecturer/research assistant/mentor in the clinic is like ... because ...", "Healthcare team members in the clinic are like ... because ...", and "Patients are like ... because ..." before and after clinical practice.

### Research Process

The students entered clinical practice for the first time on February 28, 2023. Beforehand, the students had received

52 hours of theoretical and 52 hours of simulation-supported practical training. Clinical practice was carried out once a week for 13 weeks, 8 hours a week. Due to the earthquake in Türkiye on February 6, 2023, the theoretical course was held using distance learning (synchronized online), simulation-supported practical training also took place, and their clinical practice occurred in person. This course aims to provide students with general skills regarding health and disease. Within the scope of their clinical practice, each teacher ( $n = 6$ ) was responsible for the clinical teaching of approximately 16 students. In addition, midwives and nurses in the clinic served as mentors to the students. At the beginning of the study, one researcher informed the students who had successfully passed the 52-hour Basic Practices Simulation Training course about the study. Both verbal and written consent were obtained from the students who met the inclusion criteria and volunteered to participate in the study. Before going into clinical practice, students who met the inclusion criteria were given the SIF and CPPF at the beginning of February and were asked to fill out the forms. The study analyzed the forms of 86 students. After obtaining consent from the students, they were divided into groups, and appointments were made. Each group had a maximum of 10 students. The researchers ensured that the group members sat at different points in the designated classrooms in order to prevent them from being affected by each other. Group interviews were conducted, and the students were asked to fill in the blanks of the specified statements using metaphors. The students were asked to raise their hands regarding anything they did not understand during the interviews. Each group interview was completed in at most 120 minutes. At the end of each interview, analyses were made, and the interviews continued until data saturation was reached.

### Ethical Aspect of the Research

To conduct the study, ethics committee approval (Approval No. 2023/85 dated February 7, 2023) was obtained from the Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee. The participants were additionally informed that their identities would be kept confidential and that the data would only be used for this study. The study was conducted per the Principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

### Data Analysis and Evaluation

The students' sociodemographic data were analyzed using the program IBM SPSS version 25. Continuous variables are expressed as arithmetic mean, standard deviation (*SD*), minimum, and maximum values and categorical variables as frequencies and percentages.

### Metaphor Analysis

The metaphorical statements were analyzed through the content analysis approach, as used in similar studies in the literature (7,10,11,12).

## RESULTS

Table 1 presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the students participating in the research. Their average age is  $19 \pm 1.01$  years. Of the participants, 79.3% (n = 69) were determined to be Anatolian High School graduates. While the mothers of 54% (n = 47) are primary school graduates, the fathers of 50.6% (n = 44) are secondary school graduates (Table 1).

**Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Students**

Variables		
Age Mean±SD ( Min-Max. )	19.00±1.01 (18-45)	
Graduated High School	n	%
Anatolian high school	69	79.3
Normal highschool	2	2.3
Science high school	10	11.5
Health vocational high school	5	5.7
<b>Mother's Education Level</b>		
Cannot Read or Write	4	4.6
Primary education	47	54.0
Secondary education	33	37.9
High education	2	2.3
<b>Father's Education Level</b>		
Primary education	30	34.5
Secondary education	44	50.6
High education	12	13.8

The study first examined the questionnaires collected from the participants for usability. Table 2 (Clinical Practice), Table 3 (Teacher in the Clinic), Table 4 (Health Team Members in the Clinic), and Table 5 (Patient Provided with Clinical Care) show the metaphors in which the students participating in

the research expressed their perceptions about their clinic, as well as the themes and sub-codes prepared based on the metaphors. In addition, the examinations regarding the questions asked before and after the clinical practice are given below.

### Metaphors Regarding Clinical Practice (Internship)

Of the 86 students in the study, 28 were excluded due to missing data prior to starting clinical practice. Data collection was completed once saturation was reached regarding the statements of the remaining 53 students. Of the 86 students in the study, 36 students were excluded due to having incomplete data after the clinical application. Because the statements of the remaining 45 students were saturated, data collection was considered complete. The students determined to have produced 44 different metaphors related to clinical practice before starting their clinical practice, and these metaphors are grouped under five main themes (Table 2). Below are some of the student statements regarding clinical practice before starting practice.

*It is like a key to a door that opens to the future because it is the first step of our profession that we will do throughout our lives.* (Student 28)

*Clinical internship is kind of scary because I don't know what to do, I'm afraid of doing something wrong.* (Student 3)

After the clinical practice, the students produced 36 different metaphors related to clinical practice, and when examining the contents of these metaphors, five main themes were determined (Table 2). Below is one student's statement.

**Table 2. Students' Metaphors and Metaphor Themes Regarding Clinical Practice (Internship)**

AFTER CLINICAL PRACTICE (N=45)								
Themes	Metaphors	MF* (f)	MN $\alpha$ (n)	Themes	Metaphors	MF* (f)	MN $\alpha$ (n)	
Wide variety / Exciting	Repair kit, Mall, Carnival, Single Seat, Bullet train, Game	6	6	Exciting / Complexity	Surprise box, Maze, Beehive	3	3	
Scary	Scary, Closed Room, Iceberg, Waitress	4	4	Work/Centre of Work	Life (2), Spirit of life, Sun (2), Chain (team) (2), Family, Garden	9	6	
Teaching / Guiding	Book (3), School (5), Education, Kindergarten, Primary School, Teacher, Informative, Success, Turtle, Flower that has not yet bloomed, Diary, White pen, Moon (2), Tourist guide, Shoes	22	15	Teaching / Guiding	Experience, Tree, School (5), Test book, Book (2), Education, Navigation, Guide, Moon, Lantern, Growth-development, Path, Car, Pyramid, Turtle	20	15	
Continuously Make anin game, Worker bee, Tree, Seed (2), Effort	Factory, Machine, Discipline, Level-up	10	9	Practice / Observation	Training area, Laboratory, Kitchen, Art workshop	4	4	
A new beginning / Entering the profession / Basic of life	anin game, Worker bee, Tree, Seed (2), Cross-stitch, Bond (between caregiver and patient)	11	10	Preview of the Profession / Beginning of the Career Path / Firsts	Trailer (a long road), Rehearsal (2), Travel, Home, Primary school, Kindergarten, Diary, Key	9	8	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>44</b>			<b>45</b>	<b>36</b>	

\*Metaphor Frequency ,  $\alpha$  Number of Metaphors

*It's like a surprise box because we start every day with new excitement and don't know what awaits us. (Student 26)*

### Metaphors Regarding Teachers in the Clinic

Among the statements of the students in the study about the teacher in the clinic, 12 were excluded from the analysis before the clinical practice and 24 after the clinical practice due to missing statements (the metaphor part [is like...] was written down but not the reason [because ...]). Thus, the analyses were completed with 69 participants pre-practice and 57 after starting practice. The students were observed to have produced 44 different metaphors about the teacher in the clinic pre-clinical practice, with three main themes emerging in line with this (Table 3). Below are some of the students' statements.

*In the clinic, the teacher is like a compass because we do not have enough information in the first place, and our teachers help us find our way. (Student 5)*

*The teacher is like a mother because the baby first learns everything from the mother and their environment. (Student 19)*

After starting clinical practice, the students produced 31 different metaphors about the teacher in the clinic, with four main themes being determined for these metaphors (Table 3). Some of the students' statements are as follow.

*The teacher is like a light because they show us the right path because they correct our mistakes and show us the right ones; they tell us what to do and illuminate our path like a shining light in the dark. (Student 29)*

*The teacher is like an inspector because the teacher comes and checks you out all of a sudden. (Student 78)*

*The teacher is like a sudden quiz because they appear suddenly. (Student 79)*

### Metaphors Regarding Health Care Team Members in the Clinic

Among the students' statements in the study about the healthcare team members in the clinic, 30 were excluded from the analysis pre-clinical practice due to having incomplete information (the metaphor was written but not the reason). Therefore, data saturation was reached with 51 students. They were observed to have produced 38 different metaphors about the healthcare team members in the clinic pre-clinical practice, with three main themes emerging in line with these metaphors (Table 4). Some of the students' statements are as follow.

*The medical team is like pearls on a necklace because they have to work in harmony and stay in constant communication, otherwise the pearls on the necklace will separate and the harmony will be broken. (Student 36)*

*They are like groups of worker bees because working as a team rather than alone always progresses faster. (Student 51)*

After starting clinical practice, 36 of the students' statements about the medical team members were excluded from the analysis due to containing incomplete information (i.e., the metaphor was written, but not the reason). Therefore, the second step of this part of the study analyses was completed with 45 participants. The participants were seen to produce 37 different metaphors, with three main themes being derived from these (Table 4). Below is one student statement.

**Table 3. Students' Metaphors and Metaphor Themes Regarding Educator in the Clinic**

AFTER CLINICAL PRACTICE (N=57)							
Themes	Metaphors	MF* (f)	MN <sup>α</sup> (n)	Themes	Metaphors	MF* (f)	MN <sup>α</sup> (n)
Sheds Light / Guidance / Educative / Experienced / Knowledgeable / Formative / Productive	Lighthouse, Flashlight (2), Light (5), Lamp, Sun, Map, Compass (8), Guide (3), Navigation, Book writer, Book (4), Pen ink, Parent, Brother/sister, Sewing machine, Master, Pomegranate, Scientist, Owl, Telephone, Baker, Carpenter, Fertile land, Key	41	24	Guidance / Educative /	Guide (3), Guiding (5), Commander, Director, Road sign, Sign, Compass (4), Map, Light (9), Lantern (2), Sun (2), Parent, Grandparent, Mother-father (3), Master, Lesson, Book (4), Gardener	42	18
Person who leads / Integrative	Leader, Commander, Scout leader, Brain, Captain, Toothpaste	6	6	Leader / Follower	Supervisor, Radar, Trainer, Luck, Human brain	4	4
Kind / Supportive / Helpful / The person who makes you feel comfortable and confident / The Basis of Life / Indispensable / Beginning of Life	Mother (9), Family, Hero without cape, Walking stick, Supporter, The Wall, Safe zone, Sister, Seat cushion, Home, Water, Water of life, Patience, Parents	22	14	Kind / Supportive	Mother (3), Helper, Support, Colleague, Home, Eraser, Family member	8	6
-	-	-	-	Inspector	Overseer, Quick exam, Chili pepper	3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>44</b>			<b>57</b>	<b>31</b>

\*Metaphor Frequency, <sup>α</sup> Number of Metaphors

**Table 4. Students' Metaphors and Metaphor Themes Regarding Health Team Members in the Clinic**

AFTER CLINICAL PRACTICE (N=45)							
Themes	Metaphors	MF* (f)	MN <sup>α</sup> (n)	Themes	Metaphors	MF* (f)	MN <sup>α</sup> (n)
Instructive / Guiding / Exemplary	Signboard (2), Traffic sign, Light, Candle, Map, Model, Book, Calculator	9	8	Instructive / Guiding	Master (3), Book, Visual book, Television, Navigation, Pole star, Compass, Sign, Key	11	9
Parts that Make up the Whole / Acting Together / Team / Unity / Harmonious / Hardworking / Disciplined	Chain (2), Handcuffs, Pearls of necklace, Puzzle Pieces (2), Pieces of robot, Children holding hands, Color palette, Human body, Comrade (2), Team Player (2), Friend (4), Fellow, Beehive, Tree (2), Tree branches, Table chairs, Sun and moon, Street lamp, Ant (3), Soldier	30	20	Part of the Whole / Complementary / Orderly / Seriousness / Hardworking	Parts of the food processor, Branches of the tree, Stars, Pearls of the necklace, Overgrown trees, Fingers of the hand, Chain, Solar system, Sun and moon, Vitamin, Half an apple, Soldier army, Traffic, Bee (2), Handcuffs, Store owner (importance of cooperation)	17	16
Helpful / Healing / Sincere / Support / Enjoyable	Caregiver, Sister, Sibling, Superhero, Medicine, Fairy/magic wand, Family (3), Family members, Sofa edge, Slides	12	10	Someone in the Family / Indispensable for life	Family (4), Brother and sister, Sister, Mother and father, Mother, Parent, Friend (3), Comrade, Fellow, Support center, Oxygen, Heart	17	12
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>38</b>			<b>45</b>	<b>37</b>

\*Metaphor Frequency , <sup>α</sup> Number of Metaphors

**Table 5. Students' Metaphors and Metaphor Themes Regarding the Patient Provided with Clinical Care**

AFTER CLINICAL PRACTICE (N=60)							
Themes	Metaphors	MF* (f)	MN <sup>α</sup> (n)	Themes	Metaphors	MF* (f)	MN <sup>α</sup> (n)
The Reward for the Effort / The Task that Needs to be Done / Seeing the Reward for What You Do	Tree, Fruit, Food, Field, Responsibilities, Mirror	6	6	Work / Labour	Responsibility (2), Tree (2), Field, Seed (2), Plant, Destination	9	6
Person in Need of Attention and Care / Requiring a Solution	Flower (12), Plant, Orchid, Seed, Baby (10), Newborn, Child (2), Poor, Person sitting on sofa, Exam question, Knitting ball	32	11	In Need of Care / In Need of Support	Flower (15), Baby (9), Innocent baby, Child (3), Son, Pet, Student, Oil painting	32	8
Precious and Blessed Person	Diamond, Pearl, Cat (precious), Book (precious), Family member, Special, Relative (3), Top priority, Son, Precious, Family, Eye, The trust (important)	15	13	Valued	The most precious, Unique, The most loved toy, The valued object, The trust, Family (2)	7	6
Learning Tool / Requiring Attention	Subject, Exam paper, Exam	3	3	Learning Tool / Real / Practice	Exam (2), Paper-pencil, Model, Subject (3), Practice book, Life, Mirror (2), Puzzle	12	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>33</b>			<b>60</b>	<b>28</b>

\*Metaphor Frequency , <sup>α</sup> Number of Metaphors

*Members of the healthcare team in the clinic are like hearts because they are indispensable; the clinic is very difficult without them. (Student 11)*

### Metaphors Regarding the Patients Being Provided with Clinical Care

Among the statements about the patients receiving care in the clinic, 25 students in the study pre-clinical practice and 21 students after starting clinical practice were excluded from the analysis because their statements had incomplete information (the metaphor was written, but not the reason). Therefore, the study analyses were completed with 56 pre-clinic participants

and 60 participants after starting clinical practice. Because data saturation was reached with the statements, the study data were considered complete at this stage. While 33 different metaphors were found with four main themes related to patients pre-clinical practice, 28 different metaphors with four main themes were found after starting clinical practice (Table 5). Accordingly, some of the student statements pre-clinical practice about patients receiving care are found below.

*The individuals to whom I provide care in the clinic are like diamonds because they should always be valued. (Student 22)*



After starting clinical practice, some of the students' statements regarding the patients receiving care are as follows.

*They're like a puzzle because I'm designing a program to find existing and potential problems with them.* (Student 62)

*They are like a model because we apply what we've learned on them.* (Student 20)

## DISCUSSION

Midwifery students begin to gain a professional identity during their education and aim to provide good health care throughout their professional lives. Clinical practice is an applied discipline and has an essential place in midwifery education. Midwifery teachers (lecturers) should give importance to their students' clinical practice experiences and should receive frequent feedback on this subject. Metaphors are used to express a concept with another concept with similar characteristics and have great power for understanding complex and abstract ideas. Metaphor studies try to reveal meanings using language, and these studies obtain metaphors related to the researched subject by asking the participants one or more open-ended questions (7). The present metaphor study has used metaphors to collect and analyze its research data. As a result of the analyses, the study has described the students' perceptions toward clinical practice, with the findings discussed below within the scope of the literature.

### Metaphors Regarding Clinical Practice (Internship)

In line with the students' statements pre-practice, one negative main theme (i.e., scary) was determined. No negative expressions were found for the responses after starting their clinical practice. The students were determined to have defined clinical practice as work after starting clinical practice. Thus, a new main theme was obtained (i.e., work/work center). According to La Sala et al., nursing students positively perceive how clinical practice is taught (13). Another study conducted qualitative interviews with nursing students and reported the students to have experienced stress that had negatively affected their clinical practice (14). From this point of view, students' perspectives on clinical practice provide an essential basis for students' learning processes and preferences for their future work environments. Clinical practice is considered necessary for determining an effective curriculum's success and students' academic achievement.

### Metaphors Regarding Teachers in the Clinic

The instructors who guided the students in their practice conducted chairside visits. Students were asked to obtain information about their patients (e.g., gathering evidence from patient files, receiving verbal information from patients) and to make presentations at the bedside. In addition, students were accompanied while caring for the patients and during invasive procedures. Accordingly, the main themes in Table 3 show the students pre-clinical practice to have defined the teaching staff with values such as kind, supportive, and helpful. However,

kindness/supportiveness was seen to have been left out after starting clinical practice, with the students then having been determined to see the teaching staff mainly as guiding, instructive, and knowledgeable supporters. In one study where nursing students practiced according to two different teaching models, the students found the teaching model that included intensive mentoring more satisfactory (15). Learning methods and individual motivations are the most critical indicators of effective teaching. In addition, students' interactions with their instructors are thought to affect their academic success (16). Nursing students accept the supervisory power of the instructor in the clinical setting and consider it to be necessary for patient safety (17). In addition, the formation of the central theme of the instructor after starting clinical practice is believed to be caused by some students feeling hesitant about making a bedside presentation and answering the instructor's verbal questions.

### Metaphors Regarding Health Care Team Members in the Clinic

Pre-practice, the students in the clinic were determined to mostly focus on the concept of team. After starting clinical practice, the students stated the healthcare team members in the clinic to have educational roles. This situation is thought to be beneficial in practice.

According to Aydin Er et al. (18), first-year nursing students were seen to give more importance to values such as smiling, patience, and calmness with regard to the nursing profession. In contrast, fourth-year nursing students were seen to emphasize responsibility and scientific curiosity. Another study conducted with nursing students observed experienced specialists to contribute to developing positive attitudes toward nursing skills and knowledge (19). A study that qualitatively investigated medical students' professional perceptions found the students to state themselves to have been insufficient at acquiring professional values. According to that study's results, the reasons for this inadequacy were faculty members' inability to be role models, insufficient clinical experience, and limited interactions with healthcare team members (20). Another study stated the cooperation among the teacher, students, and healthcare team members in the clinic to provide nursing students with a positive experience of clinical learning (21). Also in line with the literature, an effective healthcare team member relationship has been found to support overcoming failures and learning experiences (22).

### Metaphors Regarding the Patients Receiving Clinical Care

In the pre-clinical practice statements about the patients receiving care in the clinic, values are mentioned such as frequently valuing those needing care. At the same time, an increase is found regarding the concept of learning tools in the statements made after starting clinical practice, as well as for statements touching on work. One study stated that nurses who care for chronic patients experience difficulties due to unpredictable, problematic, and strenuous processes in their

care experience and that these nurses have difficulty meeting patients' needs (23). While adequate theoretical knowledge is expected from newly graduated nurses, nurses expect to gain the ability to apply this knowledge to their patients (24). When looking at the current study's results, the students are seen after starting their clinical practice to have given importance to specialization regarding patient care and to teaching on this subject.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The students have been concluded to compare the clinic to school the most, both before and after their clinical practice, and to perceive it as a teaching/guiding phenomenon. While pre-clinical practice statements used kindness-themed metaphors more when describing the teacher, this use is seen to have decreased after starting their clinical practice, and the use of knowledgeable person-themed metaphors is seen to have increased. Metaphors describing health team members as a team were seen to have had more weight before the clinical practice. After starting clinical practice, namely once the students started interacting with the healthcare team members, they used metaphorical expressions describing them as similar to themselves and wise. Pre-clinical practice, the students viewed patients more as individuals in need of care. After starting clinical practice, although they continued to see patients as individuals in need of care, the students also saw patients as learning tools and people who require responsibility.

This study has used metaphors to reveal midwifery students' thoughts about their experiences before and after starting their first clinical practice. The study has enabled determination of students' perceptions of clinical practice, which constitutes an important part of midwifery education. In this way, the study is thought to be able to shed light on how to identify the deficiencies in clinical practice and how to arrange future training needs.

### Strengths

This pioneering study has revealed in depth the perceptions of midwifery students who are just entering clinical practice about clinical practice and shown them to generally express positive statements. This study is thought to be able to contribute to how the course can be managed in the coming years by understanding students' expectations and feelings regarding clinical practice. Monitoring the changes in the students' perceptions as expressed in this study over their 4-year university education will allow their perceptions to be more deeply understood in their professional lives. New studies using long follow-ups will also be able to reveal midwifery students' perceptions and can also be used as a tool for making the changes that are necessary regarding the education system.

### Limitations

The February 6, 2023 earthquake caused massive destruction and was felt in 11 provinces of Türkiye. As a result, the

theoretical part of the course had to be done with distance education, while the practical part was done in person. The fact that the theoretical part of the course had been conducted online is thought to have possibly affected the study's results.

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**Ethics Committee Approval:** This study was approved by the ethics committee of the Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Approval No. 2023/85 dated February 7, 2023).

**Informed Consent:** Written consent was obtained from the participants.

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