



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Nursing

Perception of teachers on ideal clinical learning environment

KEY WORDS: Clinical learning environment, teachers

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ABSTRACT

The clinical learning environment encompasses all that surrounds the student nurse, including the clinical setting, the staff, the patient, the nurse mentor and the nurse educator. The clinical learning environment is an interactive network of forces within the clinical setting that influence the students' clinical learning outcomes. The study was to assess the perception of teachers on ideal clinical learning environment and to find the association between the perception scores and selected variables. A descriptive survey approach was used. The study was conducted among 81 teachers in selected teaching hospitals at Udupi district. The obtained data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. 84% teachers had excellent perception on ideal clinical learning environment. There was no significant association between the perception scores and selected variables.

Introduction

Nursing as a profession has evolved in response to society's needs for well-prepared, caring practitioners during clients' episodes of illness and promote health among all age groups. Clinical practice, which takes place in the clinical environment, is a vital component in the nursing curriculum and has been acknowledged as central to nursing education¹. The clinical environment encompasses all that surrounds the student nurse, including the clinical setting, the staff, the patient, the nurse mentor and the nurse educator².

The clinical learning environment is an interactive network of forces within the clinical setting that influence the students' clinical learning outcomes³. It is within this environment that students develop their attitudes, competence, interpersonal communication skills, critical thinking and clinical problem-solving abilities⁴. Nursing students perceive the practice setting as the most influential context when it comes to acquiring nursing skills and knowledge⁵.

Clinical placement provides the student with optimal opportunities to observe role models, to practice by one self and to reflect upon what is seen, heard, sensed and done⁶. The learning becomes integrated into personality to create a holistic way of seeing and relating. The professional socialization of nurse learners occurs largely in the practice setting⁷.

The social climate or learning environment is the personality of a setting or environment, such as a family, an office or a class room. Each setting has a unique personality that gives it unity and coherence. Environments, like people, also differ in how rigid and controlling they are. Like some people, some social environments are friendlier than others. Just as some people are very task oriented and competitive, some environments encourage achievement and competition. Clinicians and researchers have evidence to show how social climate affects each person's behaviour, feelings, and growth⁸.

The concept of social climate also emphasizes the importance of the physical, human, interpersonal and organizational properties, mutual respect and trust among teachers and students⁹. In the process of teaching and learning, the learning environment has a dual function. From the teacher's point of view, educational environments can be a powerful teaching instrument at the disposal of the teacher. From the student's perspective, educational environments provide an important vehicle for learning.

Materials and methods

A descriptive survey approach was used in the study. The study was conducted among 81 teachers in selected teaching hospitals at Udupi district. The tools were developed by the researcher and validated by experts in the field of nursing and medical education. Samples were selected by simple random method, who met the sampling criteria. The reliability of the tool 2 was assessed by

cronbach's alpha by administering the tool to 20 samples and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.93. Pilot study was conducted to assess the feasibility and practicability. The obtained data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

Section 1: Description of sample characteristics.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of sample characteristics (n=81)

| Sample characteristics | Teachers | |
|-------------------------------|----------|------|
| | (f) | (%) |
| 1. Age (in years) | | |
| 20-29 | 51 | 63.0 |
| 30-39 | 23 | 28.4 |
| 40-49 | 07 | 08.6 |
| 50-59 | 00 | 00.0 |
| 2. Gender | | |
| Male | 09 | 11.1 |
| Female | 72 | 88.9 |
| 3. Religion | | |
| Christian | 46 | 56.8 |
| Hindu | 35 | 43.2 |
| Muslim | 00 | 00.0 |
| Others | 00 | 00.0 |
| 4. Marital status | | |
| Married | 40 | 49.4 |
| Unmarried | 41 | 50.6 |
| 5. Educational status | | |
| Diploma | 00 | 00.0 |
| Graduate | 49 | 60.5 |
| PBBSc | 00 | 00.0 |
| Post graduate | 32 | 39.5 |
| MPhil | 00 | 00.0 |
| Doctorate | 00 | 00.0 |
| 6. Designation | | |
| Assistant Lecturer | 49 | 60.5 |
| Lecturer | 22 | 27.2 |
| Assistant professor | 08 | 09.9 |
| Associate professor | 02 | 02.5 |
| Professor | 00 | 00 |
| 7. Teaching experience | | |
| Yes | 81 | 100 |
| No | 00 | 00 |
| 8. Clinical experience | | |
| Yes | 54 | 66.7 |
| No | 21 | 33.3 |

The data presented in table 1 shows that majority of the teachers were females (88.9%) between the age group of 20–21 years and Christians (56.8%) by religion. Majority of teachers were graduates (60.5%) and having the designation as assistant lecturer.

Section 2: Description of the perception of teachers on ideal clinical learning environment.

In order to identify the perception of teachers on ideal clinical learning environment, structured clinical learning inventory was administered. The maximum score was 350 and minimum score was 70. The scores were arbitrarily categorized as poor (70 – 140), good (141 – 210), very good (211 – 280) and excellent (281 – 350).

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of the perception score of teachers on ideal clinical learning environment. (n=81)

| Perception categories | Range of score | Teachers | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------|-----|
| | | (f) | (%) |
| Poor | 70 -140 | 0 | 0 |
| Good | 141 - 210 | 0 | 0 |
| Very good | 211 - 280 | 13 | 16 |
| Excellent | 281 - 350 | 68 | 84 |

The data presented in table 2 shows that, 13 (16 %) teachers had very good perception on ideal clinical learning environment and 68 (84%) teachers had excellent perception on ideal clinical learning environment.

Table 3: Mean and SD perception score of teachers on ideal clinical learning environment (n=81)

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Mean | 303.77 |
| Standard deviation | ±19.97 |

The data presented in table 3 shows that the mean score was 303.77 with standard deviation of 19.97.

Table 4: Area wise mean and standard deviation of perception score of teachers on qualities of clinical teacher, clinical teaching, ward atmosphere (n=81)

| Area wise perception scores | Items | Mean | SD |
|---|-------|--------|-------|
| Perception on qualities of clinical teacher | 24 | 108.16 | ±6.46 |
| Perception on clinical teaching | 13 | 53.59 | ±5.07 |
| Perception of clinical or ward atmosphere | 9 | 39.79 | ±3.98 |

The data presented in table 4 shows that the mean score on perception on qualities of clinical teacher was 108.16 with standard deviation of 6.46. The mean score on perception on clinical teaching was 53.59 with standard deviation of 5.07. The mean score on perception of ward atmosphere was 39.79 with standard deviation of 3.98.

Table 5: Item wise percentage distribution of the perception score by teachers on ideal clinical learning environment (n=81)

Clinical learning environment inventory consisted of 70 items. Most relevant thirty five items were selected from the clinical learning environment inventory and percentage distribution was done.

| Sl. No | Items | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--------|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1) | Clinical teacher need to be impartial | 75.3 | 19.8 | 4.9 | 0 | 0 |
| 2) | Clinical teacher should display sense of humor | 39.5 | 53.1 | 7.4 | 0 | 0 |
| 3) | Clinical teacher should show patience | 60.5 | 39.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4) | Clinical teacher need not show interest in students' problems | 32.1 | 37 | 19.8 | 7.4 | 3.7 |
| 5) | Clinical teacher need not be friendly towards students | 27.2 | 30.9 | 13.6 | 18.5 | 9.9 |
| 6) | Clinical teacher should have self-confidence | 88.9 | 6.1 | 4.9 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------|------|------|------|------|
| 7) | Clinical teacher need to be democratic | 46.9 | 39.5 | 11.1 | 2.5 | 0 |
| 8) | Clinical teacher should dedicate herself to the work | 64.2 | 32.1 | 3.7 | 0 | 0 |
| 9) | Clinical teacher should be self-disciplined | 71.6 | 21 | 7.4 | 0 | 0 |
| 10) | Clinical teacher should be punctual | 70.4 | 29.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11) | Clinical teacher should be skillful | 70.4 | 28.4 | 1.2 | 0 | 0 |
| 12) | Clinical teacher should present learning material in a logical sequence | 364.2 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13) | Clinical teacher should communicate clearly | 77.8 | 22.2 | | 0 | 0 |
| 14) | Clinical teacher should encourages students participation in all activities in the clinical area | 77.8 | 19.8 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 |
| 15) | Clinical teacher should be approachable | 81.5 | 16 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 |
| 16) | Clinical teacher should be competent to solve problems | 79 | 18.5 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 |
| 17) | Clinical teacher should maintain good spirit of solidarity among other health professionals in the area | 56.8 | 38.3 | 4.9 | 0 | 0 |
| 18) | Clinical teacher should maintain a sense of trust and mutual respect with the students | 67.9 | 29.6 | 2.5 | 0 | 0 |
| 19) | Clinical teacher should give regular feedback to the students | 63 | 30.9 | 6.2 | 0 | 0 |
| 20) | Clinical teacher should have positive attitude towards supervision | 60.5 | 38.3 | 1.2 | 0 | 0 |
| 21) | Clinical teacher should give individual guidance to students | 44.4 | 42 | 13.6 | 0 | 0 |
| 22) | Clinical teacher should be there with the students throughout clinical posting | 33.3 | 32.1 | 25.9 | 6.2 | 2.5 |
| 23) | Clinical teacher should assign innovative activities to students. | 54.3 | 39.5 | 6.2 | 0 | 0 |
| 24) | Clinical teacher should not dominate debriefing sessions | 1.2 | 2.5 | 29.6 | 38.3 | 28.4 |
| 25) | Clinical teacher should appreciate the effort of students | 70.4 | 24.7 | 4.9 | 0 | 0 |
| 26) | Clinical teacher should allow students to do procedures independently based on their level of education | 49.4 | 27.2 | 11.1 | 9.9 | 2.5 |
| 27) | New and different ways of teaching students should be used in the ward | 49.4 | 43.2 | 7.4 | 0 | 0 |
| 28) | Students in the ward should follow the instructions of the supervisors | 54.3 | 38.3 | 6.2 | 1.2 | 0 |
| 29) | Staff should address student by their names | 60.5 | 28.4 | 9.9 | 1.2 | 0 |
| 30) | Supervision should be based on a relationship of equality | 53.1 | 37 | 2.5 | 6.2 | 1.2 |
| 31) | Students should participate in planning the day's activities | 46.9 | 35.8 | 11.1 | 4.9 | 1.2 |
| 32) | Students should have opportunity to involve with the handing over during shift change | 56.8 | 30.9 | 9.9 | 2.5 | 0 |
| 33) | Ward philosophy should be clear so that students know what to do | 59.3 | 40.7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 34) | Students should work for a maximum of 8 hours in a day with one hour rest in between | 42 | 37 | 12.3 | 4.9 | 3.7 |
| 35) | Students should do different types of tasks in every shift | 48.1 | 48.1 | 3.7 | 0 | 0 |

Section 3: Association between the perception of teachers and selected variables.

There was no significant association between total perception scores and selected variables.

Discussion

Clinical experience for nursing students is a very important aspect of their professional education. A supportive clinical learning environment is of paramount importance in securing the required teaching and learning process. The practice place should provide the students with an environment where they can receive learning opportunities. As the time allocation for the clinical component of pre-registration nurse education is limited, it is important that the scarce but valuable clinical time be utilised effectively. The value of this study lies in the resulting implication for nursing education and future research. A better understanding of what constitutes quality clinical education from the students' perspective would be valuable in providing better educational experience. While the clinical learning environment has a major and definite impact on the outcomes of students' clinical placement, there are many other reasons for the problems associated with undergraduate clinical education. In order to view the wider picture, it is necessary to explore beyond the issues of the clinical learning environment.

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