



Nursing Students Perceptions of Effective Clinical Instructors Characteristics

Mori Agustina br Perangin-angin
Fakultas Ilmu Keperawatan Universitas Advent Indonesia
mori.peranginangin@unai.edu

ABSTRACT

Clinical instructors have a very important role in the learning process of nursing students, especially in clinical areas such as hospitals. The purpose of this study was to identify nursing students' perceptions of effective clinical instructors' characteristics.

This research was conducted at Universitas Advent Indonesia with a descriptive, correlation design. The sample used was 152 nursing students taken randomly. The instrument used was the Effective Clinical Instructor Characteristics Inventory (ECICI) consisting of 40 statements, which were grouped into three sections, as (1). Professional Competence with 20 statements, (2). Relationships with Students with 8 statements, and (3). Personal-attributes with (12) statements. Data collection was conducted from June to July 2019.

Relation With Student' as the most important characteristic of effective clinical instructors' characteristics. The five highest-ranked from 40 statements were (1). Communicate effectively; breaks down content in a down-to-earth manner; (2). Friendly attitude; (3) Respect student as an individual; Open-minded, objective, non-judgmental; (4). Able to transfer knowledge and skills to students for safe practice; Be honest and direct with students, and (5). Demonstrate self-control & patience. The t-test results showed that there were differences in perceptions between male and female students with a sig value of 0.046 (<0.05).

It is hoped that the results of this study can provide input to staff and faculty in improving or enhancing the characteristics of effective clinical instructors. It is necessary to orient the new clinical instructor about the characteristics that need to be improved.

Keywords: Clinical Instructors Characteristics, Nursing students, Effective Clinical Instructor Characteristics Inventory

INTRODUCTION

Clinical practice is an integral part of nursing education. The goal of nursing education is to be able to produce professional and competent nurses. In order to obtain professional and competent nurses, students need to gain learning experience on the ground in order to be able to be learned in the classroom. Clinical practice is a challenging experience for nursing students specifically for those who have no prior experience.

During clinical practice, students can integrate knowledge and skills in caring for patients, conducting assessments and providing nursing care directly to patients and learning things they might not get in the classroom. They also learn to play a role as prospective nurses who will take full responsibility in providing care to patients. They learn to adapt to situations they have never imagined before. Too often practical experiences cause anxiety because they have to perform new skills in different situations. To facilitate these needs, nursing students must gain practical experience supported by effective clinical instructors. Clinical instructor behavior both positively and negatively influences the level of stress of students and impacts on their learning abilities (Cook, 2005).

The clinical instructor is an educator who teaches in classroom, laboratory and clinical fields. They have a huge influence on the learning process and improvement of students' clinical skills and influence in the development of the nursing profession. They must have the ability to help students apply the knowledge learned in the classroom into real situations in the clinical setting. Clinical instructors will guide nursing students to become nurses who are reliable, competent and skilled in order to provide safe and good quality health services for patients, families, and communities.

Nursing student's perception can be used as a method to measure the characteristics of effective clinical instructors in nursing education. Barnett & Mattew, (1998) states that student ratings can be reliable and valid indicators of effective teaching. It is important to be an indicator of modifying and facilitating the needs of nursing students and improving the education program for nurses.

Universitas Advent Indonesia is a private university located in Bandung, Indonesia and has a faculty of nursing and more than 450 nursing students. The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of nursing students about the characteristics of effective clinical instructors and to explore the different perceptions between male and female students for enhancing clinical teaching-learning which give beneficial for learning outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The education system in nursing always integrates clinical practice as an inseparable part. It is important to hone the abilities and skills of students so they can become competent nurses. The role of clinical instructors is very important in realizing educational goals in nursing.

Various studies have been conducted to identify the characteristics of effective clinical instructors to improve students' ability to provide safe and quality nursing care. Heshmati-

Nabavi, Vanaki & Zohreh (2010) conducted research on nursing students in Iran and faculty members. The results are five characteristics of effective clinical instructors, namely personal traits; meta-cognition; making clinical learning enjoyable; being a source of support; being a role model. Another study by Ismail, Aboushady, Eswi (2016) to 333 nursing students in Cairo using NCTI instruments, the results were matching clinical teaching abilities, nursing competence and evaluation to student understanding and experience as effective clinical instructor characteristic. Nursing students emphasize that personality and interpersonal relationships are very important characteristics possessed by clinical instructors in order to support and motivate students during clinical practice. From the results of research conducted by Madhavanprabhakaran, Hayudini, Narayanan (2013) using ECICI instruments the results are five characteristics of the most effective clinical instructors, namely Objective evaluation, role modeling, clinical competence and communication skills, respecting students' individuality.

Tang, Chou, Chiang (2005) state that there are 4 categories of clinical instructor quality required, namely professional competence, interpersonal relationships, personality characteristics, and teaching abilities. But the most distinguishing between effective and ineffective clinical instructors lies in their attitude towards students. Therefore it is highly recommended that clinical instructors can enhance positive attitudes so that they can help students achieve their goals in clinical teaching. Hanson & Stenvig, (2008) identify the characteristics of effective clinical instructors are knowledge, interpersonal presentation, and teaching strategies; good interpersonal skills, clinical competency, professionalism, and an understanding of the principles of adult learning (Girija, 2012).

METHODS

This study was conducted to 152 nursing students at Universitas Advent Indonesia using descriptive correlation design to identify nursing student's perceptions toward effective clinical instructor's characteristics. Descriptive designs are useful to gain additional information about characteristics within a particular area of study which impact them in clinical learning. The sample used was taken randomly.

The instrument used was the Effective Clinical Instructor Characteristics Inventory (ECICI) consisting of 40 questions, which were grouped into three sections (1). Professional Competence with 20 statements, (2). Relationships with Students with 8 statements, and (3). Self-attributes with 12 statements using a four-point Likert- rating scale, ranging from "most

important” to “unimportant”. (1= unimportant, 2 = less important, 3 = important and 4=most important).

152 nursing students from the second year to final who were exposed to clinical instructions were contacted personally by researcher and administered the questionnaire. Students were asked to self-rate the questionnaire in presence of the researcher, for clarification if needed. It took on average 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Data collection was conducted from June to July 2019. The data were analyzed using SPSS. Both descriptive and inferential statistics including frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation and “t” test were conducted to identify the gender difference in perception.

RESULTS

Data Demographics:

Demographic data in table 1 shows that of the 152 respondents, the majority were women, 111 (73%) and the rest 41 male (27%).

Tabel 1. Distribution of Male and Female Nursing Students (n-152)

Gender	Responden (n=152)	Percentage
Female	111	73%
Male	41	27%

Important Characteristics of the Effective Clinical Teacher

As shown in table 2, nursing students of Universitas Advent Indonesia perceived Relation With Student’ as the most important characteristic (92.3%), followed by Personal Attributes (90.7%), and Professional Competence (90.1%).

Table 3 shows that the five highest rank from 40 statements about effective clinical instructor characteristics were (1). Communicate effectively; breaks down content in a down-to-earth manner; (2). Friendly attitude; (3) Respect student as an individual; Open-minded, objective, non-judgmental; (4). Able to transfer knowledge and skills to students for safe practice; Be honest and direct with students, and (5). Demonstrate self-control & patience.

Tabel 2. The rank of Characteristics of the Effective Clinical Instructors perceived by nursing students

No	Component of Effective Clinical Instructor Characteristics	%
1	Relation With Student (RWS)	92.3 %
2	Personal Attributes (PA)	90.7 %
3	Professional Competence (PC)	90.1 %

Tabel 3. Rank Order of Effective Clinical Instructors Characteristic Perceived Important by Nursing Students of Universitas Advent Indonesia

Items	Characteristics of Effective Clinical Instructors	Category	%
15	Communicate effectively; breaks down content in a down-to-earth manner	PC	95.1 %
27	Friendly attitude	RWS	94.9 %
21	Respect student as an individuals	RWS	94.6 %
20	Open-minded, objective, non-judgmental	PC	94.6 %
4	Able to transfer knowledge and skills to students for safe practice	PC	94.2 %
30	Be honest and direct with students	PA	94.2 %
31	Demonstrate self-control & patience	PA	93.9%
2	Shows competence in clinical skill	PC	93.1%
22	Encourage students to feel free to ask questions or help	RWS	92.9 %
35	Exhibit responsibility and autonomy	PA	92.9
25	Be supportive and helpful	PWS	92.6
40	Be creative and well-prepared.	PA	92.3 %
23	Permit freedom for discussion	PWS	92.1 %
3	Able to co-relate theory to practice	PC	92.1 %
11	Evaluate students objectively and fairly	PC	91.9 %
28	Mentoring approach	PWR	91.8 %
19	Receptive to people and ideas	PC	91.3 %
26	Encouraging demeanor	PWR	91 %
29	Approachable	PA	91 %
32	Show enthusiasm in nursing and teaching	PA	90.8 %
12	Provide individualized timely feedback	PC	90.8 %
39	Be respectful and self-confident	PA	90.5 %
17	Interact with students	PC	90.5 %
38	Be organized and dedicated	PA	90.3 %
33	Be flexible when the occasion calls for it	PA	90.1 %
1	Demonstrates knowledge of nursing in the area of instruction	PC	90 %
34	Respond promptly and confidently	PA	90 %
16	Inform students about goals, expectations, desired outcomes, deadlines	PC	89.6 %
8	Available to students in the area of clinical Instruction	PC	89.3 %
10	Provide study guides/ outlines	PC	89.1 %
6	Facilitate critical thinking in clinical practice	PC	89 %
12	Provide individualized timely feedback	PC	89 %

7	Role modeling-Demonstrate skills, attitudes, values that are to be developed in students in the clinical area	PC	88.8 %
24	Permit expression of feeling	PWS	88.7 %
18	Able to collaborate with other disciplines	PC	88.5 %
36	Be energetic and eager to know	PA	87.8 %
9	Have designated office and clinical hours	PC	85.6%
37	Have a sense of humor	PA	84.7%
14	Gives tests that reflect course objectives, lecture materials, and study guides.	PC	84.2%
5	Know the learner individually	PC	83.7%

The difference between Male and Female Students Perception

Table 4 shows that there are differences in perceptions between male and female students with p-value <0.05. The mean indicates that females (146.14) are higher than males (141.95).

Tabel 4. **Difference in Male and Female Students Perception**

Sex	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	P Value
Female	111	119	160	146.14	10.454	0.046
Male	41	108	160	141.95	13.651	<0.05

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study highlighted 'Relation with Student' as the most important characteristic for nursing students at Universitas Advent Bandung. These study findings confirm results from studies conducted in Australia where students rated interpersonal relationship as the most important domains (Lee, Cholowski and Williams, 2002); Wolf et al. (2004) suggested that good teachers create positive relationships with students, are professional role models, and provide students with interpersonal support. Tang, Chou, and Chiang (2005) also found that interpersonal relationships as the highest score perceived by nursing students from two nursing schools in Taiwan. Kotzabassaki et al., (1997) also found that interpersonal relationships as the most important characteristics. Johnson et al., (2002) reported that the relationship between clinical instructors and students impacts student confidence in their role as a nurse. The findings of this study differed from studies conducted in other Arab countries like Jordan (Nahas, Nour, and al-Nobani, 1999); Oman (Madhavanprabhakaran, Hayudini, Narayanan, 2013); Johnson et al., 2002 that highlighted professional competencies of a clinical instructor as the most important characteristic.

Overall many researchers agree that interpersonal relationships with students reflect the ability of instructors to respect students as an individual, encourage students to feel free to ask questions or help, permit freedom for discussion, permit expression of feeling, be supportive and helpful, encouraging demeanor, friendly and mentoring approach. In addition, no evidence could be sort to explain the different perceptions between male and female students about effective clinical instructors.

Clinical instructors must possess effective teaching characteristics such as professional knowledge, role modeling, and clinical competence. In addition, the teacher's personality is essential because experiencing the proper pattern of clinical instructor's behavior is a motivation for educating students. Furthermore, student-teacher communication affects students' attitudes. Researchers have reported different views on the characteristics of a good teacher as teaching skills, communication skills and effective teacher's characteristics (Gignac-Caile & Oermann, 2001).

Conclusion

The results of this study can be used as input for faculties for improvement in the needed area. Clinical instructors are expected to increase relationships with students to reach better outcomes. Faculties need to examine more closely the factors that cause differences perception between male and female students.

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