

Nursing Students' Perceived Effective Clinical Teachers' Behaviors

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Abstract: Clinical teaching is a core component of nursing education. The clinical teachers' roles and responsibilities are to supervise clinical activities and empower students to gain clinical competency and skills. The nursing students' perspective of effective clinical teachers' behavior is an important indicator of facilitating and improving clinical education quality. This paper explored diploma nursing students' perceived importance of effective clinical teaching behavior in helping their learning. A total of 165 nursing students from various levels of their diploma in nursing program from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) were invited to participate. A self-administered questionnaire was employed to collect demographic data and students' perceptions of effective clinical teacher behaviors and their importance on learning outcomes using the Nursing Clinical Teaching Effectiveness Inventory (NCTEI). The study results indicated that nursing students perceived evaluation as the most important effective clinical teaching behavior, while personal characteristics are the least important effective clinical teaching behavior. The results showed a significant positive relationship between the frequency of effective clinical teaching behavior used and the level of importance of effective clinical teaching behavior for all five criteria. This information can be used to improve faculty awareness of students' views on clinical teaching performance and as a guide for the clinical instructor to develop and revise the clinical teaching approach in the clinical setting. Behavior perceived to be effective should be incorporated into clinical instructor practice, thereby maximizing students' learning experiences in the clinical setting.

Keywords: Effective Clinical Teaching Characteristics, Clinical Teaching In Nursing, Clinical Teaching Behaviour.

1. Introduction

Clinical education is a key field that explains the importance of a nursing student's performance in the clinical environment. Clinical learning offers students an opportunity to practice and expand their skills, develop their professional identity, and apply theoretical and practical knowledge to the clinical setting (Estrada et al., 2015). Experience in clinical education facilitates the mastery of psychomotor, cognitive, and affective activities for competent entry-level practice (Antohe et al., 2016).

Clinical education is a core component of any nursing program in Malaysia. A minimum of 52 weeks of clinical placement with a hundred percent attendance is required before the students are registered as nurses with Malaysian Nursing Board (Malaysian Nursing Board & Malaysian Midwives Board, 2018). Students registered for a diploma in the nursing programme are placed for clinical attachment at selected hospitals and clinics in Sarawak. The nursing sisters, registered nurses, and the clinical teachers in the unit must ensure that patients receive the best health care, and the students must be taught the appropriate nursing care skills. The clinical teachers must enable the students to acquire enough exposure and experience in a specific nursing area. The students also need to learn how to cope and encounter situations, thus facilitating their growth and development into competent, independent practitioners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Role of Clinical Teachers

The role of the clinical teacher is an extremely important factor in nursing students learning. The clinical instructor role and responsibilities to supervise all student nurses' clinical activities and present all content from the formal classroom. Thus, this entails them being prepared with the current knowledge of the specialized discipline, trends, and nursing issues. Yascavage (2016) indicated that the clinical teachers' preparation for their role could impact student learning and patient safety. Clinical teachers who stay clinically current and have a collaborative relationship with other health care professionals in the clinical environment create trust and remain effective in the clinical setting (Hababeh & Lalithabai, 2020).

According to Glynn, McVey, Wendt and Rusell (2017) the role of clinical teachers as perceived by students are mentoring with basic nursing skills and the ability to coordinate with clear objectives. A study by Zhao, Wang and Wang (2018) concluded that the roles of clinical teachers, including as a teacher, researcher, nurse, nurse mentor, and supervisor, relate closely to the findings of the study by Gibbs and Kulig (2017) reported that nursing instructors were strong role models for students. Consistent findings with the study by Niederriter, Eyth and Thoman (2017) found that characteristics identified as an effective clinical instructor were role models: the coach, the debriefing process, being organized, and exhibiting professional behavior. The clinical instructors rated activities being guides and role models and creating a positive atmosphere for their students to learn and reflect. Evoking trust; having clear expectations; being authentic in communications; being respectful, encouraging, and willing to share past experiences; acting as a role model are the attributes of a competent clinical instructor (Zlotnick, Jones, Koren, Peters, Saffer & Torsvik, 2016).

2.2 Nursing Students' Clinical Experience

Students have a diverse perception of the realities of the clinical learning environment. The actual and potential experiences influence these perceptions during clinical placement. Some students have appraised their clinical placement positively (Lamont et al., 2015), while some give negative evaluations due to inadequate learning support and assistance from a clinical nurse during clinical placement (Papastavrou, Lambrinou, Tsangari, Saarikoski & Leino-Kilpi, 2010). A study conducted by Sharif and Masoumi (2005) found that nursing students were not satisfied with their education's clinical component. They experienced anxiety due to feeling incompetent and lacking professional nursing skills and knowledge

to take care of various patients in the clinical setting. Assignment work and the clinical environment had been identified as the primary sources of stress for these students (Shaban, Khater & Akhu-Zaheya, 2012).

Henderson, Cooke, Creedy and Walker (2012), in their study about predominant features of clinical learning environments from nursing students' perspectives, found that students rated highly on the sense of task accomplishment and affiliation while for students' individual needs and views, they ranked as low. These similar findings were recorded across three different countries. This finding was supported by a study comparing two models, namely peer learning in student-dedicated units (model A) and traditional supervision (model B). This study had been conducted by (Ekstedt, Lindblad & Löfmark 2019). By using these two models, they found that students had positive experiences in the clinical learning environment. The finding shows that students who supervised in model A had more positive experiences of the cooperation and relationship between student, preceptor, and nurse teacher, and more often compared the students in model B who felt that the ward had an explicit model for supervising students. Students in model A were having more positive experience than one preceptor since they felt that this contributed to the assessment of their learning outcomes. A good learning environment for students in clinical placements is dependent on an explicit structure for receiving students, a pedagogical atmosphere where staff take an interest in the supervision of students and are easy to approach, and engagement among and collaboration between preceptors and nurse teachers.

Another comparison study by Kim, Kim and Son (2011) on nursing students' attitudes toward death, self-esteem, and life satisfaction according to clinical experience also had been done. This study revealed that students with clinical experience had significantly higher self-esteem and life satisfaction than those without it. Students with clinical experience also had a correlation between attitude toward death and self-esteem and life satisfaction, while those without it, did not. In conclusion, these results provided guidance to develop educational strategies such as the educational program to help students so that they can build a positive attitude toward death through their experience in clinical practice.

2.3 Effective Characteristic of Clinical Teacher

A study done by Jansson and Ene (2016) in Sweden revealed that clinical instructors and preceptors build nursing students' confidence levels in the clinical area and train them to develop clinical skills independently. There is a significant association between behavior and clinical learning quality. The presence of instructors in the clinical area helps students achieve their learning objectives and be active learners (Lamont, Brunero & Woods, 2015). Therefore, the students appreciate their teacher's presence in the clinical area as they have much time to support (Noonan, Hughes, Hayes, Hartigan, O'Connell, Cummins & Fehin, 2009). However, this claim is contradicted, the presence of an instructor made the students anxious and felt like being examined (Msiska, Smith & Fawcett, 2014). Teachers' competence is the most influential factor in students' clinical learning (Biffu, Dachew, Tiruneh, Ashenafie, Tegegne & Worku, 2018; Ludin & Fathullah, 2016). However, when the instructors had inadequate clinical experience, the students could not learn effectively in the clinical area (Jahanpour, Azodi, Azodi & Khansir, 2016). This finding is supported by Brammer (2008), which established that some registered nurses lacked the relevant skill to facilitate student learning. The nursing teacher's skills level affected the students' perception regarding the teacher's strengths and weaknesses (Shahsavari, Parsa, Houser Ghiyasvandian, 2013).

Constant support and feedback from the clinical nurses and the clinical teacher enhanced nursing students' clinical learning (Jahanpour et al., 2016). Students prefer feedback from the supervisor to advance their clinical learning, promote personal growth, benefit the students, and develop the supervisor professionally (Clynes & Raftery, 2008). The nursing student reported that timely feedback, availability, and the instructors' approachability enhance their learning (Sweet & Broadbent, 2017). Providing constructive feedback and being fair in the evaluation process is an essential skill for developing and molding the student into great nurses (Rowbotham & Owen, 2015).

Students identified a trusting relationship as one of the most important aspects of clinical experience. Hence, the students gained more knowledge, developed more critical thinking, and became

more confident when the instructor has the experience and expertise in the area they were teaching, used the coaching technique to assist learning, and was a role model for the students (Niederriter et al., 2017). Similar findings with Ali (2012) students perceived the most important effective clinical teaching characteristics of their clinical instructors are from the category of knowledge and experience, interpersonal relationship, and evaluation. Shamsavari et al. (2013) revealed a major factor influencing the student-instructor relationship was the close contact between the instructor and the student in a clinical setting. The key reason for this close contact was to provide additional time for coordination and prevent practical error.

A finding from a study done by Valiee, Moridi, Kahledi & Garibi (2016) revealed that the most effective teaching strategies were treating students, clients and colleagues with respect and being eager to guide students and manage their problems. Effective Clinical instructors need to establish professional relationships and collaborate with other health care providers. Effective communication, respect, and confidence in student ability can increase student's motivation for learning. Good clinical teaching resulting in good clinical learning (Ludin & Fathullah, 2016). The finding from a study done by Pournamdar (2015) regarding the effective characteristics of clinical instructors from students' points of view showed that professional features, personal features, and teaching features had the highest score. Being reliable, fair, and having good morals are the effective characteristic of the clinical instructor.

3. Experimental / Computational details

The study was conducted using a cross-sectional approach and employed a self-reporting questionnaire. This study used a non-experimental survey, which provided a means to collect data from students about how their perceived clinical teachers' teaching behaviors without disrupting the clinical experiences being studied. The participation of the students was voluntary. The purpose of the research project, risk and benefits of participation, and verbal consent was given. Students of Diploma in Nursing at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Sarawak branch were asked to complete the survey. The sample size comprised 165 students from the first year to the third year. To be eligible for inclusion in the study, the student must have participated in the patient care clinical activities and had completed at least one clinical practice session to have the necessary experience to complete the survey.

The data collection tool consisted of two parts. Part one of the questionnaire was designed to collect the demographic data, including their gender, age, race, ambition as a nurse, number of clinical experiences completed, and year in the program. The main portion of the tool was in Part Two, Nursing Clinical Teacher Effectiveness Inventory (NCTEI) designed by Knox and Mogan (1985) related to clinical teaching behaviors.

Part Two was divided into two subsections, A and B. In sub-section A, the students were asked to rate how frequently clinical instructors used the effective teaching behaviors on a seven-point Likert scale (1= never, 7= very frequently). For subsection B, these scale items were designated to capture students' perceptions on the level of importance of effective clinical teaching behaviors in facilitating their learning. The students rated how important each effective clinical teaching behaviors facilitated their learning on seven points Likert scale for each of the 48 NCTEI items (1 = not at all important, 7 = most important). After students rated how frequently the clinical teaching behavior was used, they rated how important clinical teaching behavior helped their learning.

A few statistical analyses were performed in this study such as mean and correlation analysis. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science Software (SPSS) version 25.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents who were involved in this study. There are 157 respondents for this study, and most of them are female nursing students (96.2%), and the remaining is male nursing students (3.8%). The majority of the respondents are 19 years old (48.4%), with the Iban

being the highest in number 59 (37.6%). Most of the respondents admitted that a nurse is not their ambition (82.8%). However, they have successfully completed the clinical posting at least once.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Label	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	6	3.8
	Female	151	96.2
Age	18	1	0.6
	19	76	48.4
	20	38	24.2
	21	40	25.5
	22	2	1.3
Race	Dusun	5	3.2
	Iban	59	37.6
	Malay	54	34.4
	Kenyah	2	1.3
	Bugis	1	0.6
	Brunei	2	1.3
	Bidayuh	14	8.9
	Berawan	1	0.6
	Kelabit	1	0.6
	Melanau	6	3.8
	Bajau	2	1.3
	Kadazan	5	3.2
	Kedayan	2	1.3
	Rungus	2	1.3
	Lun Bawang	1	0.6
Ambition as a nurse	Yes	27	17.2
	No	130	82.8
Completed Clinical Posting	1	75	47.8
	3	40	25.5
	7	42	26.8
Year	1	75	47.8
	2	40	25.5
	3	42	26.8
Semester	2	75	47.8
	4	40	25.5
	6	42	26.8
Total		157	100

Reliability Analysis

Reliability test was performed to measure how accurate or reliable the study data was. Pallant (2011) mentioned that the data is considered reliable if Cronbach's Alpha value is more than 0.7. Tables 2 and 3 show the reliability of both frequent use of clinical teaching behavior and the importance of clinical teaching behavior. The results revealed that both frequency of use and the importance of clinical teaching behavior were reliable as the Cronbach's Alpha values were more than 0.7 for all variables.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis for Frequent of using Clinical Teaching Behavior

Criteria	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Teaching Ability	16	0.954
Interpersonal Relationship	6	0.914
Personal Characteristics	7	0.879
Nursing Competence	10	0.938
Evaluation	9	0.926

Table 3: Reliability Analysis for Importance of Clinical Teaching Behavior

Criteria	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Teaching Ability	16	0.933
Interpersonal Relationship	6	0.841
Personal Characteristics	7	0.872
Nursing Competence	10	0.909
Evaluation	9	0.894

Frequent of Clinical Teaching Behavior Used by Clinical Teachers

In order to know how frequently the clinical teachers applied clinical teaching behavior in their teaching, respondents need to answer the questions of frequent clinical teaching behavior used by clinical teachers. The questions are provided in 7 Likert-scale for each item. Scale 1 refers to never use of clinical teaching behavior while scale 7 for very frequently uses clinical teaching behavior. To determine the frequency of clinical teaching behavior use, we calculated the mean score for each criterion and categorized it into three levels of frequent, which are low, moderate, and most as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Level of Frequent

Mean Score	Level of frequent
1.00 – 3.00	Low
3.01 – 5.00	Moderate
5.01 – 7.00	Most

Mean score in Table 5 reveals the most frequent effective clinical teaching behavior used by the clinical teacher. The clinical teachers are very aware of the importance of clinical teaching behavior for their teaching. The nursing competence category ranked the highest in usage, followed by teaching ability, personal characteristics, interpersonal relationships, and evaluation. For the nursing competence category, the students rated the clinical teachers often enjoy nursing, demonstrate clinical skill and judgment, and be a good role model to the students. Regarding the teaching ability category, most of the students' rated that their clinical teachers frequently emphasize what is important for the lessons, demonstrate clinical procedures and techniques, and promote student independence compared to the others. Students' rated that

the clinical teachers are frequently self-confident, organized in their work, and demonstrate enthusiasm to their students in responses to the personal characteristics category. For the interpersonal relationships category, the clinical instructors are rated frequently to encourage a climate of mutual respect, provide support and encouragement to students, and listen attentively. Regarding the clinical teachers' evaluation category, they always make a specific suggestion for improvement, provide feedback on students' performance, and give students positive reinforcement for good contributions, observations, and performance.

Table 5: Mean Score for each category

Variables	Mean Score	Level of Frequent
Teaching Ability	5.7970	Most
Interpersonal Relationship	5.6422	Most
Personal Characteristics	5.7084	Most
Nursing Competence	5.9840	Most
Evaluation	5.6372	Most

Importance of Effective of Clinical Teaching Behavior

For this study, the respondents rated the importance of effective clinical teaching behavior based on 7 Likert-scale for each item. Scale 1 refers to not important at all, and scale 7 for most important. In order to determine the important clinical teaching behavior, we calculated the mean score for each category and categorized it into three levels of importance, which are low, moderate, and high as listed in Table 6.

Table 6: Level of Importance

Mean Score	Level of Importance
1.00 – 3.00	Low
3.01 – 5.00	Moderate
5.01 – 7.00	High

Table 7 shows the mean score for each category. The findings reveal that respondents perceived all five categories of effective clinical teaching behavior as highly important in nursing student clinical learning. The students rated the evaluation as the most important category of effective clinical teaching behavior, followed by teaching ability, nursing competence, interpersonal relationship, and personal characteristics. Knowing which clinical teacher behaviors enhance nursing students' learning can help the instructor revise her clinical teaching approach and, thus, create a more conducive learning environment (Pugh, 1988).

For the evaluation category, the students' ratings that observe students' performance frequently, give students positive reinforcement for good contributions, observations, and performance, and identify students' strength and limitations objectively are important. The students agreed that demonstrating clinical procedures and techniques, emphasizing what is important in their learning, and promoting student independence are very important clinical teaching behaviors for their learning from the teaching ability category. For the nursing competence category, the students rated the clinical teacher's important behavior must enjoy nursing, demonstrate clinical skill and judgment, and be a good role model. For the interpersonal

relationship category, the students highly emphasized the importance of encouraging a climate of mutual respect, supporting and encouraging students, and listening attentively as the most important behavior. The respondents also mention that clinical teachers must be self-confident, organized, and demonstrate enthusiasm as the most important behavior from the category of personal characteristics.

Table 7: Mean Score for each category

Variables	Mean Score	Level of Importance
Teaching Ability	6.4894	High
Interpersonal Relationship	6.4519	High
Personal Characteristics	6.3853	High
Nursing Competence	6.4891	High
Evaluation	6.5292	High

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis will be used to investigate the significant relationship between frequency use and level of importance on effective clinical teaching behavior. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 8.

Pearson Correlation Analysis concluded that there is a significantly positive relationship between frequency use and level of importance on effective clinical teaching behavior for all five categories (p-value < 0.01). This indicates that the more frequent of using clinical teaching, the more effective clinical teaching behavior, especially for personal characteristics since it has the highest correlation coefficient with 0.524, followed by nursing competence and teaching ability with a correlation coefficient of 0.494 and 0.442, respectively. Evaluation and interpersonal relationships also give a positive relationship but with a low correlation coefficient of 0.329 and 0.306, respectively.

Table 8: Correlation Analysis

	Importance Teaching Ability	Importance Interpersonal Relationship	Importance Personal Characteristic	Importance Nursing Competence	Importance Evaluation
Frequent Teaching Ability	0.442** (0.000)	0.303** (0.000)	0.364** (0.000)	0.428** (0.000)	0.336** (0.000)
Frequent Interpersonal Relationship	0.351** (0.000)	0.306** (0.000)	0.415** (0.000)	0.412** (0.000)	0.368** (0.000)
Frequent Personal Characteristic	0.437** (0.000)	0.371** (0.000)	0.524** (0.000)	0.472** (0.000)	0.423** (0.000)
Frequent Nursing Competence	0.451** (0.000)	0.350** (0.000)	0.427** (0.000)	0.494** (0.000)	0.424** (0.000)
Frequent Evaluation	0.293** (0.000)	0.240** (0.002)	0.364** (0.000)	0.375** (0.000)	0.329** (0.000)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

5. Limitation of the study

This study was limited by using a convenience sample, small sample size, and limited geographical distribution (one setting). Thus, it may not represent all the diploma nursing students as a whole and may not be generalized beyond this institution.

6. Conclusion

Clinical experiences are a vital part of student education as the nursing profession is dealing with people's lives. For the acquisition of clinical skills, the learning environment must be equipped with qualified clinical teachers to teach and supervise the students during clinical placement to ensure that they become proficient and ultimately meet the learning outcome and objective as stipulated by the Ministry of Health Malaysia. The clinical teacher must possess effective teaching behavior to facilitate clinical learning. The finding showed that clinical teachers are aware of the importance of clinical teaching behavior for their teaching. The nursing competence category ranked the highest usage, while the evaluation category ranked the lowest usage by the clinical teacher. However, the result for frequency use and level of importance is contradicted. The students perceived evaluation as the most important category of effective clinical teaching behavior and personal characteristic as the least important category. The finding indicated the existence of a significant positive relationship between frequency use and level of importance on effective clinical teaching behavior for all five categories. This study delineated some characteristics of effective clinical teachers that could be incorporated into clinical teachers' orientation to enhance and optimize the student's clinical experience. The results may assist multicultural faculty in appreciating students' views and acknowledging areas of success and areas needing improvement. As clinical teachers become aware of those characteristics that are perceived as important, teaching strategies and attitudes can be reinforced, modified, or developed to promote clinical learning and an enjoyable experience for students.

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