

PERCEPTION OF NURSING STUDENTS ON CLINICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Dr.Soney M Varghese¹, Dr.Veena M Joseph², Dr.Sija Binoy³, Remya Pillai⁴

¹Asst.Professor, CON,Gulf Medical University,Ajman,UAE

²Asst.Professor, CON,Gulf Medical University,Ajman,UAE

³Lecturer, CON,Gulf Medical University,Ajman,UAE

⁴Lecturer, CON,Gulf Medical University,Ajman,UAE

Email: soneysan@gmail.com

DOI: 10.47750/pnr.2022.13.S09.354

Abstract

Introduction: Clinical learning environment provides opportunities for students to develop competence, to socialize with the profession and to bridge the gap between academic and workplace learning. The quality of clinical learning environment influences student's achievement of learning outcomes and their perception of clinical learning environment.

Materials and Methods: A Quantitative approach with descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted to assess the perception of nursing students on ideal clinical learning environment. The samples were nursing students and total samples included were 90. Total enumerative sampling was adopted. The tools are prepared based on the literature reviews and experts' guidance. The objectives of the study were to identify the perception of nursing students on ideal clinical learning environment, structured clinical learning inventory was administered. The scores were arbitrarily categorized as poor (≤ 88), good (89 – 175), very good (176 – 265) and excellent (266 – 350). Data was collected online, and it was analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results & Discussion: The study findings revealed that majority were females (78.89%) and less than 21 years (62%) were unmarried (94.44%). Majority of the nursing students' (47.77%) were from first year. The results shows that a total of 88 (97.7%) nursing students had excellent perception on how an ideal clinical learning environment should be. The total mean score was 543.477 with standard deviation of 67.46. There was no significant association was found between demographic and perception scores.

Conclusion: Clinical experience for nursing students is a crucial aspect of their professional education. A supportive clinical learning environment is of paramount importance for competency development. It should provide the students with an environment where they can receive optimal learning opportunities.

Keywords: Nursing Students, Perception on Clinical learning environment, Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Clinical learning is of high importance in competence development of nursing students. Upon graduation, nursing students are expected to possess high-level competency to provide effective and high-quality nursing care, ensuring the safety of patients in the rapidly changing health care environment¹. The acquisition of competences is completed when the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values acquired during the theoretical studies are transferred into practice in different health care contexts².

Learning in a clinical environment involves challenges in balancing delivery of quality healthcare and students' learning³. A supportive clinical learning environment is central to the learning experience and the achievement of learning outcomes⁴. Challenges in clinical learning include disparities in preceptors' preparedness, lack of feedback, and external factors, such as increased class sizes and patient availability⁵. Thus, a supportive clinical learning environment does not exist self-evidently but needs active maintenance and continuous assessment⁶.

As clinical learning is carried out in complex health care settings, students' experiences are of great importance to how and what they learn. The environment should motivate students and contribute to their feeling of security while being able to ask

questions to achieve learning outcomes and reflect on their practice⁷. The clinical learning environment and student supervision play a crucial part in supporting student learning and are highly dependent on the relationship between student, preceptor, and teaching faculty⁸.

The purpose of this study was to assess the perception of nursing students on ideal clinical learning environment. Understanding these perceptions is a key starting point for optimizing the clinical learning environment and learning practices. This is particularly important because clinical training is a comprehensive part of nursing education.

Research Methodology

Quantitative approach with descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted to assess the perception of nursing students on ideal clinical learning environment. The study was done among total 90 samples and total enumerative sampling was adopted. The tools were prepared based on the literature review and experts' guidance.

Description of the tools

Tool 1- Demographic Proforma

Tool 1 -consisted of 8 items namely age, gender, nationality, religion, semester of study, marital status, and years of clinical exposure.

Tool 2 – Clinical learning environment inventory

In tool 2, consisted of 70 items. Response items are strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree and are scored as 5,4,3,2,1 respectively. Reverse scoring is done for negatively worded items. The scores obtained will be graded as Poor (≤ 88), Moderately good (89-175), Good (176-265) and Excellent (266 – 350).

Method of Data Collection

Ethical permission was obtained from Institutional Review Board, Gulf Medical University before starting the study. The study was conducted among first to fourth year students of BSN program. A Google form which included the informed consent form and the study tool was mailed to each student. After collecting the data, it was analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

The study findings were organized under the following headings.

- Section 1: Description of sample characteristics.
- Section 2: Description of the perception of nursing students on ideal clinical learning environment.
- Section 3: Association between the perception scores and selected variables.

Section 1: Description of sample characteristics.

Data were collected on age, gender, religion, marital status, educational status, and year of study.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of sample characteristics (n=90)

Sample characteristics	Nursing Students(n=90)	
	(f)	(%)
1. Age (in years)		
<21	56	62.22
21-25	29	32.22
>26	05	5.55
2. Gender		
Male	19	21.11
Female	71	78.89
3. Religion		
Christian	13	14.44
Hindu	01	1.11
Muslim	76	84.44
4. Marital status		
Married	05	05.56
Unmarried	85	94.44
5. Year of Study		
First	43	47.77
Second	21	23.33
Third	17	18.88
Fourth	07	7.77

The data presented in table 1 shows that, among students' majority were females (78.89%) and less than 21 years (62%). Majority of student nurses were unmarried (94.44%) and Muslim (84.44%) by religion. Majority of the nursing students' (47.77%) were from first year.

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

To identify the perception of nursing students on ideal clinical learning environment, structured clinical learning inventory was administered. The maximum score was 350. The scores were arbitrarily categorized as poor ≤ 88 , good (89 – 175), very good (176 – 265) and excellent (266 – 350).

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of the perception score of nursing students on ideal clinical learning environment. (n=90)

Perceptioncategories	Range of score	Total (n=90)	
		(f)	(%)
Poor	≤ 88	0	0
Good	89-175	0	0
Very good	176-265	2	2.22
Excellent	266 - 350	88	97.7

The data presented in Table 2 shows that, a total of 88 (97.7%) nursing students had excellent perception on how an ideal clinical learning environment should be.

Table 3: Mean and Standard deviation of nursing students' perception on ideal clinical learning environment. (n=90)

	NursingStudents Perception
Mean	286.67
Standard deviation	31.64

The data presented in Table 3 shows that, the total mean score was 286.67 with standard deviation of 31.64

Table 4: Area wise mean and standard deviation of perception score of nursing students on qualities of clinical teacher, clinical teaching, ward atmosphere an individualization (n=90)

Perception on qualitiesof clinical teacher (24 items)	
Mean	98.31
Standard deviation	8.61
Perception on clinicalteaching (13 items)	
Mean	55.22
Standard deviation	7.31
Perception of clinical atmosphere (9 items)	
Mean	38.52
Standard deviation	6.20
Individualization (3 items)	

Mean	10.16
Standard deviation	1.57

The data presented in Table 4 shows that, the total mean score on perception on qualities of clinical teacher was 98.31 with standard deviation of 8.61. The total mean score on perception on clinical teaching was 55.22 with standard deviation of 7.31. The total mean score on perception of ward atmosphere was 38.52 with standard deviation of 6.20. The total mean score on perception of individualization was 10.16 with standard deviation of 1.57.

Table 5: Area wise mean and standard deviation of perception score of nursing students on fostering work place learning, ward as a learning environment, ward atmosphere and individualization (n=90)

Fostering workplace learning (10 items)	
Mean	41.95
Standard deviation	7.22
Ward as a learning environment (4 items)	
Mean	14.73
Standard deviation	2.49
Affordances and engagement (7 items)	
Mean	27.76
Standard deviation	4.40

The data presented in table 5 shows that, the total mean score on perception on fostering workplace learning was 41.95 with standard deviation of 7.22. The total mean score on perception on Ward as a learning environment was 14.73 with standard deviation of 2.49. The total mean score on perception of Affordances and engagement 27.76 with standard deviation of 4.40.

Section 4: Association between the perception of nursing students and selected variables.

To find association between the perception scores and selected variables, chi-square test was employed. When the expected cell count was less than 5 in 20% of cells, exact value was taken instead of chi-square value. There was no significant association with any of the selected variables.

Discussion

The findings of present study reported that total of 88 (97.7%) nursing students had excellent perception on how an ideal clinical learning environment should be. While none of them had poor perception on an ideal clinical learning environment. The study findings are similar to a study by Sellberg M, et.al. where the students generally held a positive perception toward their clinical learning environment, suggesting that the environments across the health professions programs met the educational needs of

the students. However, in several aspects, the medical students provided significantly lower ratings of their clinical learning environment compared with the other students like nursing or physiotherapy⁹.

In the current study, the total mean score on perception on fostering workplace learning was 41.95 with standard deviation of 7.22. The total mean score on perception on Ward as a learning environment was 14.73 with standard deviation of 2.49. The total mean score on perception of Affordances and engagement 27.76 with standard deviation of 4.40. The findings are in contrast with a study by Sundlers et al., which concluded that student dissatisfaction with the learning environment was not only associated with having many preceptors, but also with the preceptors' attitudes and approaches, as well as with having a newly graduated nurse as preceptor¹⁰. Much like Trede et al., which argued for shifting from a focus on individual supervision to a focus on collective responsibility for creative workplace environments to promote student learning¹¹.

The current findings did not find any significant association of clinical learning perception with any of the selected variables. This is in contrast with a study by which reported certain variations between students from earlier and later semesters, with younger students from the medical and nursing programs rating the items slightly higher compared with the students from the later semesters. However, the variations did not follow a consistent pattern across the programs, so no firm conclusions can be drawn⁹.

Conclusion

Clinical experience for nursing students is a vital aspect of their professional education. A supportive clinical learning environment is of paramount importance in securing the required clinical competence. The practice place should provide the students with an environment where they can receive optimal learning opportunities. The study findings suggested that students generally hold positive perceptions toward their clinical learning environment. A better understanding of what constitutes quality clinical education from the students' perspective would be valuable in providing better educational experience and effective utilization of the clinical placements.

REFERENCES

1. Flinkman, M., Leino-Kilpi, H., Numminen, O., Jeon, Y., Kuokkanen, L., & Meretoja, R. (2017). Nurse Competence Scale: A systematic and psychometric review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 73(5), 1035–1050.
2. Kaihlanen, A.-M., Salminen, L., Flinkman, M., & Haavisto, E. (2019). Newly graduated nurses' perceptions of a final clinical practicum facilitating transition: A qualitative descriptive study. *Collegian*, 26(1), 55–61.
3. Palmgren PJ. It takes two to tango: an inquiry into healthcare professional education environments. *Inst för lärande, informatik, management och etik/Dept of Learning, Informatics, Management and Ethics*; 2016.
4. Pitkänen S, Kääriäinen M, Oikarainen A, Tuomikoski AM, Elo S, Ruotsalainen H, Saarikoski M, Kärämänoja T, Mikkonen K. Healthcare students' evaluation of the clinical learning environment and supervision—a cross-sectional study. *Nurse Educ Today*. 2018;62:143–149. doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2018.01.005.
5. Brown T, Williams B, McKenna L, Palermo C, McCall L, Roller L, Hewitt L, Molloy L, Baird M, Aldabah L. Practice education learning environments: the mismatch between perceived and preferred expectations of undergraduate health science students. *Nurse Educ Today*. 2011;31(8):e22–e28. doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2010.11.013.
6. Quigley D, Loftu L, McGuire A, O'Grady K. An optimal environment for placement learning: listening to the voices of speech and language therapy students. *Int J Lang Comm Dis*. 2020;55(4):506–519. doi: 10.1111/1460-6984.12533.
7. Levett-Jones T, Lathlean J, McMillan M, Higgins I. Belongingness: a montage of nursing students' stories of their clinical placement experiences. *Contemp Nurse*. 2007;24:162–74.
8. Luhanga F, Myrick F, Yonge O. The preceptorship experience: an examination of ethical and accountability issues. *J Prof Nurs*. 2010;26(5):264–71.
9. Sellberg M, Palmgren PJ, Möller R. —A cross-sectional study of clinical learning environments across four undergraduate programs using the undergraduate clinical education environment measure. *BMC Medical Education*. 2021 Dec;21(1):1–3.
10. Sundler AJ, Bjork M, Bisholt B, Ohlsson U, Engstrom AK, Gustafsson M. Student nurses' experiences of the clinical learning environment in relation to the organization of supervision: a questionnaire survey. *Nurse Educ Today*. 2014;34:661–6.
11. Trede F, Sutton K, Bernoth M. Conceptualisations and perceptions of the nurse preceptor's role: a scoping review. *Nurse Educ Today*. 2016;36:268–74.
12. Kamila Alammar, Muayyad Ahmad, Sultanah Almutairi, Olfat Salem (2020). Nursing Students' Perception of the Clinical Learning Environment. *The open Nursing Journal*.14,174–179.
13. Van Rooyen, D. R. M., Jordan, P. J., ten Ham-Baloyi, W., & Caka, E. M. (2018). A comprehensive literature review of guidelines facilitating transition of newly graduated nurses to professional nurses. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 30, 35–41.
14. Collard, S. S., Scammell, J., & Tee, S. (2020). Closing the gap on nurse retention: A scoping review of implications for undergraduate education. *Nurse Education Today*, 84, 104253.
15. Lee, N. P. M., & Chiang, V. C. L. (2020). The mentorship experience of students and nurses in pre-registration nursing education: A thematic synthesis of qualitative studies. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nhs.12794>