Interpersonal Communication Pattern as Perceived by Nursing Students in Their Clinical Training

Loutfi Z, Abd El Fattah S, El Ashry N, Abdel Al M

Department of Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt.

ABSTRACT

Background: The education process is a systematic, sequential, planned course of action consisting of two major independent operations, teaching and learning. This process forms a continuous cycle that involves two interdependent players, the teacher and the learner. **Objective:** The aim of this study was to assess the faculty Staff interpersonal communication pattern as perceived by the nursing students in their clinical training from the students' point of view. **Subjects and methods:** The study was conducted at the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, covering students at the different nursing departments (452): Fundamentals, medical surgical, pediatric, obstetric, community and public health and psychiatric mental health nursing. Data were collected through an opinionaire describing the characteristics of the study sample which includes: age, sex, year of study and department and open ended questions, related to students views in points; what are the positive versus negative aspects of your teachers communication in the clinical training? Your opinion will help us evaluating & enhancing the teacher/student communication. **Results:** The study revealed that, the highest nursing department with negative attitude toward teachers, was the fundamentals of nursing department **Conclusion:** The study recommended holding conferences and training workshops with staff members for discussing teachers' awareness and solving communication problems.

Key words: Interpersonal communication, Nursing, Egypt.

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INTRODUCTION

The education process is a systematic, sequential, planned course of action consisting of two major independent operations, teaching and learning. This process forms a continuous cycle that involves two interdependent players, the teacher and the learner. Together, they jointly perform teaching and learning activities, the outcomes of which leads to mutually desired behavior changes. Theses changes foster growth in the learner, and it should be acknowledged, growth in the teacher as well. Thus, the education process should always be a participatory shared approach to teaching and learning[1].

Teaching is a complex activity involving intellectual and social interactions which make use of concepts from philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Socialization of experiences are said to provide the norms, values, knowledge, and skills needed for role performance for nurse faculty. Nurse

educators have a major responsibility to prepare nurses for professional practice rather than traditional occupational training. The role of the nurse teacher is undoubtedly complex as it attempts to bridge theory-practice gap and it prepares the next generation of practitioners[2].

Teaching effectiveness was defined as "the teachers" ability to help students achieve their highest level of independent thinking and clinical competency. It requires a blend of knowledge of the subject matter, interpersonal style and flexibility in the use of a variety of teaching methods.

Clinical teaching is a specialized field which prepares students to integrate their previously acquired knowledge with skills and competencies. As students translate theory into practice, personal and professional skills, attitudes and behaviors are learned and practiced while caring for patients[3]. Clinical training is any clinical experience that takes place before licensure and occurs as part of, or immediately after, pre-service preparation[4].

Perception of role stress and psychological hardiness of nurse-educators has arisen out of investigations of nursing faculty productivity[5]. When people with inadequate stress management and need gratifying skills must work in a stressful and frustrating work environment, it is considered burnout[6]. Burnout is a work related syndrome that stems from an individual's perception of a significant discrepancy between effort (input) and reward (output)[7].

Negative stress activates a variety of physical and emotional symptoms that can lead to serious diseases if the situation lasts[8]. These include a broadband of pathological consequences, ranging from chronic fatigue to depression, and including insomnia, anxiety, migraine, emotional upsets, allergies and abuse**.**

Nursing is a particularly stressful learning experience that demands a quality teaching through competent educators with interpersonal communication skills in order to shape the students' attitude positively into the world of nursing, who are capable of managing the students' stress, and prepare them for their future professional & human practice.

This study aims at: assessing faculty-nurse/student interpersonal communication pattern during clinical training from the students' point of view and accordingly recommend communication principles for dealing with student nurses.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Research design: A descriptive exploratory design was used in carrying out this study.

Setting: The study was conducted at the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University.

Subjects:

The study included students of all years from different nursing departments; fundamentals, medical surgical, obstetric, pediatric, public health/psychiatric and mental health nursing. The students were recruited from a total of 1086 students; of them only 760 were attending the course regularly, from the 760 students, only 452 respond to the opinionaire (70% response rate).

Tools of data collection: *I. Opinionaire:* Data were collected through an opinionaire which consisted of two parts:

Part 1: Social characteristics about student as age, sex, year of study, and department.

Part 2: An open-ended question concerning the students' judgment of their teaching staff communication pattern while receiving their clinical training.

II- Recommendation concerning communication principles in dealing with students (Guidance booklet):

Contents: It covers theoretical part regarding to principles of dealing with academic students and period of adolescence.

Field work: The actual field work started in March 2008 and was completed by April 2008. The researchers met the students and explained the purpose of the study. Their oral consent to participate was obtained before starting the interview. They were assured about total confidentiality of any obtained information as their anonymous and that they were only used for the purpose of the study. The study began by determining a lecture appointment for every department, and then at the end of the lecture the opinionaire was allocated for the students of every department for knowing faculty-nurse student relationship during clinical training from student's view. Response rate was as follow: 452 opinionaire had been collected. The total number classified into: the following departments: 85 for fundamental of nursing, 105 for medical surgical nursing, 66 for obstetric nursing, 73 for pediatric nursing, 48 for public health nursing and 75 for psychiatric mental health nursing .

Statistical analysis:

Statistical analysis had been performed for students' responses regarding to the opinionaire about positive and negative attitudes toward their teachers during clinical training. Responses were analyzed and tabulated in numbers and percentages for students' positive and negative attitudes toward their teachers during clinical training. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of percentages for qualitative variables and means and standard deviations for quantitative variables. Chi-square test was used in comparing relations of qualitative variables. Statistical significance was considered at $p<0.05$ and high significance was considered at $p<0.01$. Equations used were as follows:

$$X^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \qquad T = \frac{X_1 - X_2}{\sqrt{\frac{SD^2}{n_1} + \frac{SD^2}{n_2}}}$$

RESULTS

Table (1) describes the social characteristics of students. Their age ranged from 17-24 with a mean of ranging from 18.5-21.0 ± 0.5-0.8 years. It was also found clear that all students were only females in four departments: obstetric, pediatric, public health and psychiatric/mental health nursing. Meanwhile, the other two departments (fundamentals, and medical surgical nursing) included male and female students and the percentages of female students were higher than male students, as male ratios were 47.1% and 40.0%, while they were 52.9% and 60.0% for females in the two departments.

Table (2) shows students' attitudes in nursing departments in the Faculty of Nursing. Regarding to positive attitude of students towards their teachers it reveals that the obstetric nursing department has the highest positive aspect, followed by pediatric nursing, and then psychiatric/mental health nursing (63.6%, 54.8% & 50.7% respectively). However,

negative attitude of students towards their teachers was highest in fundamentals of nursing department, followed by medical surgical department, then public health nursing, then psychiatric / mental health nursing, and then pediatric nursing and the least negative attitude was in obstetric nursing department (75.3%, 74.3%, 68.8%, 49.3%, 45.2% and 36.4% respectively).

Fig. 1 illustrates student's attitudes in the different departments. It reveals that the obstetric nursing department got the highest score in positive attitude and the least score in negative attitude, (63.6% & 36.4% respectively) while fundamental of nursing department was the highest score in negative attitude and the least score in positive attitude of (75.3% & 24.7% respectively) students towards their teacher.

Figure (1): Students' positive versus negative attitude in different departments.

Table (3) shows that keeping appointments and good dealing with students represented an equal percentage of 80.9% of positive attitudes, while spending long time at hospital without benefit (74.5%) and some of teachers are dealing by sarcastic behavior (70.2%) were the most negative attitudes for students at fundamental of nursing department.

Table (4) indicates that respecting student represented 66.7% and dealing by good manner accounted for 63.0% as positive attitudes while distinguishing between male and female students represented 70.5%, followed by increasing importance for paper assignments of clinical training (52.6%) which were the most negative attitudes for students at medical surgical nursing department.

Table (5) reveals that keeping appointments to theory and clinical training represented 59.5%, followed by efficient training by excellent manner (52.4%) and continuously present with student during clinical training (35.7%) which were the positive attitudes, but giving more importance to degrees rather than students accounted for (68.4%), followed by overload students during clinical trainings (63.2%) and distinguishing between students which were the negative attitudes for students at obstetric nursing department.

Table (6) clears that some of the teaching staff are dealing by good manner (35%) and are cooperating with students (32.5%) which were of the most positive attitudes. In the same time, not respecting for appointments and dealing by bad manner from demonstrators assistant staff representing an equal percentage of 30.3% which was the most negative attitudes for students at pediatric nursing department.

Table (7) reveals that dealing by good manner (53.3%), keeping appointments (46.7%) and giving good explanation for students (46.7%), were the most common positive attitudes. However, no benefit from home visits and leaving students alone

represented 48.5%, wasting time and effort in writing papers and clinical reports rather than clinical training accounted for 30.3% and clinical training place is far represented 33.3% of common negative attitudes for students at public health nursing department.

Table (8) shows that cooperating with students represented the highest percentage (52.6%) and communicating with respect accounted for 36.8% of common positive attitudes, while explaining presentations after clinical training represented 64.9%, followed by increasing researches costs (59.5%) and underestimating circumstances (46.0%) of that were the most common negative attitudes toward students at psychiatric mental health nursing department.

Table 1: Students' age and gender among different departments of the nursing faculty.

Departments	Range 17 – 24 & X ± SD	T & P-values	Gender			
			Male		Female	
			No	%	No	%
Fundamental of nursing	18.5 ± 0.5	28.8**	40	47.1	45	52.9
Medical surgical nursing	19.5 ± 0.6	16.3**	42	40.0	63	60.0
Obstetric nursing	20.8 ± 1.0	-	-	-	66	100.0
Pediatric nursing	20.5 ± 0.8	2.7*	-	-	73	100.0
Public health nursing	20.8 ± 0.9	Identical	-	-	48	100.0
Psychiatric/mental health nursing	21.0 ± 0.8	1.8	-	-	75	100.0

* Significant at $p < 0.05$ ** Highly significant at $p < 0.001$

Table 2: Students' positive versus negative attitudes toward teachers at different departments.

Departments	No	Students' Attitude				X^2	P value
		Positive		Negative			
		No	%	No	%		
Fundamental of nursing	85	21	24.7	64	75.3	23.3	HS
Medical surgical nursing	105	27	25.7	78	74.3	24.3	HS
Obstetric nursing	66	42	63.6	24	36.4	-	-
Pediatric nursing	73	40	54.8	33	45.2	1.2	NS
Public health nursing	48	15	31.2	33	68.8	11.8	HS
Psychiatric/mental health nursing	75	38	50.7	37	49.3	2	NS

** Highly significant P<0.01.

Table 3: Positive & negative judgment of students the fundamental nursing department (n= 85).

Positive Judgment	**n=21**	**%**
Being Punctual	17	80.9
Dealing well with students	17	80.9
Cooperating with students	15	71.4
Teaching and perfecting skills at hospital	14	66.7
Repeat explanation of theory	14	66.7
Re-explaining during clinical training	12	57.1
Answering students' questions	10	47.6
Negative Judgment	**n=47**	**%**
Spending long time at hospital without benefit	35	74.5
Teachers are sarcastic	33	70.2
Gender bias for boys	20	42.6
Not focusing on practical training	19	40.4
Teachers do not attend to hospital to observe students	18	38.3
Increasing requirements for clinical training by some teachers give in adequate clinical training	18	38.3
Teachers do not accept excuses from students	17	36.2
Teachers are giving more importance for papers (duties during training) rather than clinical training	16	34.0
Teachers behave show grandiosity in behavior	16	34.0
Teachers are dealing by rough manner	15	31.9
Teachers do not understand students' point of view	15	31.9
Teachers Threatened students by evaluation degrees	12	25.5
Teachers cannot control students	11	23.4

N.B.: Answers are not mutual exclusive

Table 4: Positive & negative judgment of students at medical surgical nursing department. (n = 105).

Positive Judgment	**n=27**	**%**
Respect students	18	66.7
Deal by good manner	17	63.0
Keep touch with students during clinical training	11	40.7
Explain clinical procedures	10	37.0
Understand students' problems	9	33.3
Keen that students acquiring information and skills	9	33.3
Negative Judgment	**n=78**	**%**
differentiate between male and female students	55	70.5
Increase importance for paper assignments of clinical training	41	52.6
Teachers do not respect students in front of patients	25	32.1
Spend a lot of time for training at hospital	25	32.1
Teachers do not respecting students	21	26.9
Teachers are not attending classes in time	18	23.1
Increasing demands regarding to clinical training	15	19.2
Teachers deal with grandiosity	15	19.2
Difference in opinions among faculty staff	14	18.0
Waste time at hospital	12	15.4

N.B.: Answers are not mutually exclusive

Table 5: Positive and negative judgment of students at obstetric department (n=66).

Positive Judgment	n=42	**%**
Keeping attending to theory & clinical training according to schedule time	25	59.5
Efficient training	22	52.4
Continuously present with student during clinical training	15	35.7
Repeat practical skills more than on time	11	26.2
Train student to be researchers	10	23.8
Effective lecturing	10	23.8
Perfect good explanation	10	23.8
Teachers have much quality information.	10	23.8
Negative Judgment	n=19	**%**
Giving more importance to performance rather than students	13	68.4
Overloading students during clinical training	12	63.2
Differentiate between students	11	57.9

N.B.: Answers are not mutually exclusive

Table 6: Positive and negative judgment of students at pediatric department (n=73).

Positive Judgment	**n=40**	**%**
Teaching staff deal by good manner	14	35.0
Cooperate with students	13	32.5
Explain & repeat clinical training steps effectively	12	30.0
Respect student	10	25.0
Negative Judgment	**n=33**	´□
Not respecting schedule	10	30.3
Poor communications skills of demonstrators	10	30.3
Shortage in skill learning of clinical training	9	27.3
Increase length of time for clinical training without benefit	9	27.3
Giving importance to clinical reports and papers rather than practical skills	9	27.3

N.B.: Answers are not mutually exclusive

Table 7: Positive and negative judgment of students at public health nursing department (n=48).

Positive Judgment	**n=15**	**%**
Dealing by good manner	8	53.3
Keeping attending classes in time	7	46.7
Giving good explanation for students	7	46.7
Negative Judgment	**n=33**	**%**
No benefit from home visit and students are left alone	16	48.5
Wasting time and effort in writing papers and clinical reports rather than clinical training	10	30.3
Clinical training place is far	11	33.3
Loss of suitable communication style	7	21.2
Not caring about students sufferings	6	18.2
Not accepting students excuses	5	15.2
Insufficient and not understandable explanations	5	15.2
Not cooperating with students during clinical training	5	15.2
Not keeping appointments	5	15.2

N.B.: Answers are not mutually exclusive

Table 8: Positive and negative judgment of students at psychiatric mental health nursing department (n=75)

Positive Judgment	**n=15**	**%**
Dealing with cooperation	20	52.6
Communicating with respect	14	36.8
Answering questions	13	34.2
Repeating explanations	13	34.2
Dealing with good manner	12	31.6
Understanding students' problems and helping to solve them	11	29.0
Being present with students during clinical training	10	26.3
Negative Judgment	**n=33**	**%**
Explaining presentations after clinical training	24	64.9
Increasing researches costs	22	59.5
Underestimating students circumstances	17	46.0
Threatening to decreased student's evaluation degrees	15	40.5
Activities and clinical training requirements cost	14	37.8
Irregularities in lectures' appointments	13	35.1
Underestimating students efforts	10	27.0
Overloading in studying	10	27.0
Bad training place and no place for dressing uniform	10	27.0
Not getting benefit from clinical training	10	27.0

N.B.: Answers are not mutually exclusive

DISCUSSION

Nurse Educators play a vital role in preparing students for the new "nursing"[9-11]. It is known that the humanistic relationships play a major role in the success of any interactive process, one of these interactive processes in the education, which is greatly influenced by a student teacher relationship. In other words, this relationship is one

essential component of the teaching and learning process. The teacher's success in facilitating learning is directly related to the quality of that relationship[12].

The study revealed that, the highest nursing department with negative attitude toward teachers, was the fundamentals of nursing department, this may be attributed to that these students coming from secondary stage, are younger than other students of other departments, many of them are newly coming to Cairo from other Governorates and large number of students are separated from their families and suddenly became completely independent in their life this could be also due to the Egyptian culture where families are overprotecting their children and especially daughters.

Concerning the positive aspects in fundamentals of nursing department, as viewed by students attending practical classes on time and dealing well with students, while the negative aspects were spending long time at hospital without benefit, this could be due to that skills required from first year of nursing are less compared to the following years, although these skills are basic for other years. It may also be due to lack of students' communication skills which are considered as a barrier that blocks the two way communication[2].

Regarding to medical surgical nursing department, dealing well and respecting students were the most common positive aspects from the students point of view toward their teachers. However differentiation between male and female students i.e. gender bias for boys was reported by more than two fifths of students as a negative aspect from their point of view toward their teachers, this could be due to some confounding factors as, the Egyptian culture which delineate to males more than females, this could also be referred to that this is the first year for this department to receive male students, oversensitivity of female students to feel embarrassed when they are criticized in front of the male colleagues. As well, increasing importance for paper assignments of clinical training could be due to the large numbers of students' degree allocated for the nursing care plan, paper assignments, and other clinical records for students' evaluations.

Results indicated that as regard teachers attending in time to theory and clinical training, it was the best department, as well as efficient training by excellent manner, were found in the obstetric department, this could be due to that this branch is critical and any mistake may be fatal to the mother and her baby. So, teachers being present with students during clinical training are important to avoid students' mistakes. Also the skilled staff performing efficient training, they are continuously present with students during clinical training.

However, the students' point of view regarding the negative attitude toward their teachers where the teachers are giving more importance to degrees rather than students, and make students overloaded during clinical training. This might be attributed to shortage of time. This finding was in accordance with that shortage of time is the greatest barrier infront of faculty staff educators to be able to carry out their role effectively[1].

In pediatric nursing department, the study revealed that faculty staff dealing by good manner and cooperating with students were from the point of view, the best characteristics. Meanwhile, they are not respecting schedule and dealing by bad

manner from assistant staff (demonstrators) were the most negative attitudes from students' point of view toward their teacher in this department. This may be due to that staff faculty employed are overloaded as they are required to be productive in all academic areas rather than just teaching, consequently the role expectations have increased in number and complexity and the potential for experiencing role strain is real[13].

In public health nursing department, keeping attending classes in time and good explanation for students, were from students' point of view, the most positive attitude of faculty staff. However, they do not benefit from home visits and are left alone; wasting time and effort in writing papers and clinical reports rather than clinical training were the most common negative judgment of faculty staff toward students. This could be due to that home visits are appropriately important for public health nursing demands, and do not perceiving the important of their role, and they need to be accompanied by their teachers to acquire skills of home visits and therefore they will appreciate their role.

Personal characteristics of the learner have major efforts on the degree to which predetermined behavioral outcomes are achieved. Readiness to learn, motivation and compliance, developmental stage characteristics, and learning styles are some of the prime factors influencing the success of educational endeavors[1].

In psychiatric mental health nursing department, results revealed that, teachers cooperating and communicating with respect with their students were the best characteristics from students' point of view of their teachers. However, explaining presentation after clinical training was reported by almost two third as a negative attitude of teacher toward their students. This could be attributed to that many clinical places were far from the faculty. In addition, discussing assignments, increasing research cost and underestimating students' circumstances were reported as negative comments. Students don't agree to make some motivations for psychiatric patients by occupational therapy meanwhile they also did not want to make their presentation by data show due to their insufficient skills to deal with Power Point program, and if they know it, they could have saved much money, effort and time. This could be due to the lack of explanation concerning the importance of having presentation skills as an aspect of their development

CONCLUSION

- Students have a high critical sense.
- They suffer from junior teacher who are not will prepared to guide them.
- They need more supervisors in the clinical training.
- They need to identify the objectives of each clinical experience.
- They need positive reinforcement.
- Most of the problems are related to communication.
- The learner remains the single most important person in the education process.
- Teacher quality is the most critical factors in improving student performance.
- Among the stressors related to teacher-student interaction, teachers have cited behaviors and disciplines problems, low motivation and lack of effort.
- Teaching is a deliberate intervention that involves the planning and implementation of instructional activities and experiences to

meet intended learner outcomes according to teaching plan.

RECOMMENDATION

- In formal meeting, students are highly need to allow to express their learning problems,
- Workshop for staff particularly the juniors are needed to acquire communication skills concerning their rapport with the students and how to give positive reinforcement.
- Clinical experience student should identify the objective of each learning experience in order to appreciate their role especially the unusual learning experience like the home visits.
- Workshops are needed for the staff to learn developing new strategies in students' education.
- Senior teachers should attend clinical training and need to leave this responsibility to junior staff.

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Author of correspondence:

Loutfi Z, Department of Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt.