Level of Satisfaction on Clinical Learning Environment among Nursing Students of Nepalgunj Nursing Campus at Kohalpur

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Clinical education is a major component of the undergraduate nursing curriculum. To practice a safe beginning level of nursing care, new graduates must have developed not only the theoretical knowledge on which to base their care but also the practical application skills required to implement that knowledge. The clinical learning environment can have a great influence on the development of attitude, knowledge, skills, and problem-solving ability of students. The clinical learning environment plays a crucial role, especially during the clinical training of student nurses, as they face the reality of their roles and responsibilities of being nurses. **Aims:** To find out undergraduate nursing student's satisfaction with their clinical learning environment. **Methods**: This cross-sectional study was conducted in the Nepalgunj Nursing Campus. The study was conducted among 40 students who were studying Proficiency Certificate Level in Nursing at the Nepalgunj Nursing Campus, Kohalpur. A non-probability sampling method was used to select the sample. A semi-structured self-administered questionnaire and the Clinical Learning Environment, Supervision, and Nurse Teacher Scale (CLES+T) were used for data collection. The Clinical Learning Environment, Supervision, and Nurse Teacher Scale is an internationally valid and reliable instrument used to evaluate the quality of clinical learning environments for students in the health professions. **Results**: More than half of the nursing students (52.50%) were highly satisfied with the clinical learning environment. The association between the level of satisfaction among nursing students and age, marital status, last clinical placement ward, frequency of meeting nurse teachers, and use of e-communication tools with nursing teachers was not statistically significant. **Conclusion**: In today's education system, which is centered on students' learning concepts and expectations, assessing the students' satisfaction level can be one of the innovative ways to bring positive changes to both the students' and teachers' experiences. However, the availability of limited research studies on this matter, makes it hard to draw any conclusions. Hence, future studies should focus on identifying the various factors influencing the satisfaction level of students with clinical learning.

Keywords: Clinical Learning Environment, Level of Satisfaction, Nursing Students

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INTRODUCTION

Nursing students' empowerment is an essential element to enhance the learning process. Nursing students' learning experiences in the classroom and the clinical placement play vital roles in their empowerment.[1] The clinical learning environment is an interactive network of forces within the clinical setting, i.e., staff, the patient, the preceptor, and the nurse educator that influence the clinical learning outcomes and have an impact on student behaviors. Hence, clinical experiences are important for student learning and professional development.[2] Satisfaction is defined as the psychological state, which results from confirmation or disconfirmation of expectation with reality.[3] Satisfaction of the students in their training contributed to intellectual, social and affective growth, classroom and college retention, academic performance, motivation, and college persistence. Satisfied students were more successful and dedicated to accomplishing their goals than unsatisfied students.[3] The clinical learning environment includes everything that surrounds students and affects their professional development in a clinical setting. There is evi-

dence supporting clinical learning is beneficial to students not only to learn and improve their clinical judgment and decision-making skills but also to stimulate their critical thinking. It also is instrumental in helping the students to recognize the consequences of their actions and in exposing them to various cultural, and psychological aspects of patient care.[3] Students' satisfaction regarding their clinical education is important to develop confidence in clinical nursing practice after graduation. Studying students' satisfaction is very important to improve educational institutions and their teaching strategies to meet students' changing demands.[2]

METHODS

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted at Nepalgunj Nursing Campus, Kohalpur, Banke for 8 months from September 2023 to April 2024 on all students studying third-year Proficiency Certificate Level in Nursing. A descriptive cross-sectional design was used to identify the level of satisfaction among nursing students in a clinical learning environment. The population of this study was all third-year nursing students of Proficiency Certificate Level in nursing. The sample size of the study was determined by a total enumerative method which was the total number of students of Nepalgunj Nursing Campus. There are a total of 40 students and hence, the sample size is 40. The questionnaires consisted of two parts: part I included demographic and academic information and part II consisted of the Clinical Learning Environment, Supervision, and Nurse Teacher scale which was developed and validated by Saarikoski et al.[4] The scale (total 34 items) measures the level of satisfaction of nursing students regarding the pedagogical atmosphere, leadership style of the ward manager, premises of nursing in the ward, supervisory relationship, and the role of the nurse teacher.

Satisfaction of each item of this scale was scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very satisfied'' to "very dissatisfied" with a total score of 170 points for the 34 items. The level of satisfaction was categorized as high-level satisfaction and low-level satisfaction based on the mean score of the sample. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the Nepalgunj Medical College. The data was collected from 23rd September 2023 to 30th September 2023. The data was analyzed using the SPSS Version 29. The chi-square test was applied to measure the association between the level of satisfaction among nursing students and various variables.

RESULTS

Variables (N= 40)	Frequency (%)
Age (Years)	
18-20	35 (87.50)
21-25	5 (12.50)
Marital Status	
Married	2 (5.00)
Unmarried	38 (95.00)
Last Clinical Placement	
Pediatric Ward	4 (10.00)
Gynecology Ward	14 (35.00)
Labor Ward	13 (32.50)
Postnatal Ward	6 (15.00)
Neonatal ICU	3 (7.50)
Frequency of Meeting Nursing Teacher	
1 – 3 times	8 (20.00)
More than 3 times	32 (80.00)
Use of E-communication Tool with Nursing Teachers	
Never	16 (40.00)
1 – 3 times	10 (25.00)
More than 3 times	14 (35.00)

Table I: Descriptive Statistics on Demographics of Nursing Students

In this study, most of the students (87.50%) were between the ages of 18 to 20 years with a median age of 19 years (Table I). The majority of the student participants (95%) were unmarried. Among the total students, the majority had completed their last clinical placement in either gynecology (35%) or labor (32.5%) wards followed by postnatal (15%), pediatric (10%), and neonatal ICU (7.5%) wards. Similarly, around 80% of the students reported meeting their nursing teacher more than 3 times. Among the total students, most reported having never used an e-communication tool with their nursing teacher whereas 35% reported using it more than 3 times and 25% reported using it for 1-3 times.

Among the five sub-dimensions of the evaluation scale measuring satisfaction in the clinical learning environment (with a five-point Likert scale), the mean score of respondent's satisfaction towards the role of nurse teacher was highest (4.11 ± 0.12) followed by satisfaction towards the role of supervisory relationship (4.04 ± 0.06), satisfaction towards leadership style of ward manager (3.92 ± 0.19), and satisfaction towards premises of nursing in the ward (3.69 ± 0.44). The satisfaction towards the pedagogical atmosphere was reported to be the least (3.70 ± 0.43) (Table II).

Clinical Learning, Environment, Supervision, and Nurse Teacher Subscales (N=40)	Mean ± SD
Pedagogical Atmosphere	
1. The staff were easy to approach.	4.20 ± 0.46
2. During staff meetings (e.g. before shifts), I felt comfortable taking part in the discussions	4.33 ± 0.73
3. I felt comfortable going to the ward at the start of my shift.	3.95 ± 0.71
4. There was a positive atmosphere in the ward.	3.40 ± 0.81
5. The staff were generally interested in student supervision.	3.95 ± 0.85
6. The staff learned to know the students by their personal names	3.10 ± 1.15
7. There were sufficient meaningful learning situations on the ward.	3.25 ± 0.95
8. The learning situations were multidimensional in terms of content.	3.53 ± 0.96
9. The ward can be regarded as a good learning environment.	3.55 ± 0.88
Total	**3.70 ± 0.43**
Leadership Style of the Ward Manager	
10. The ward manager regarded the staff on his/her ward as a key resource	4.30 ± 0.46
11. The ward manager was a team member.	4.25 ± 0.54
12. Feedback from the ward manager could easily be considered a learning situation	3.97 ± 0.42
13. The effort of individual employees was appreciated.	3.92 ± 0.62
Total	**3.92 ± 0.19**
Premises of Nursing in the Ward	
14. The ward's nursing philosophy was clearly defined.	3.92 ± 0.62
15. Patients received individual nursing care.	3.18 ± 0.87
16. There were no problems in the information flow related to patients' care	3.50 ± 0.75
17. Documentation of nursing (e.g. nursing plans, daily recording of nursing procedures, etc.) was clear	4.18 ± 0.59
Total	**3.69 ± 0.44**
Supervisory Relationship	
18. My supervisors showed a positive attitude toward supervision.	4.07 ± 0.57
19. I felt that I received individual supervision.	3.97 ± 0.62
20. I continuously received feedback from supervisors.	3.95 ± 0.88
21. Overall I am satisfied with the supervision I received.	4.10 ± 0.50
22. The supervision was based on a relationship of equality and promoted my learning.	4.08 ± 0.53
23. There was a mutual interaction in the supervisory relationship.	4.13 ± 0.79
24. Mutual respect and approval prevailed in the supervisory relationship.	4.03 ± 0.73
25. The supervisory relationship was characterized by a sense of trust.	4.05 ± 0.55
Total	**4.04 ± 0.06**
Role of The Nurse Teacher	
26. In my opinion, the nurse teacher was capable of integrating theoretical knowledge and everyday practice of nursing.	4.40 ± 0.50
27. The nurse teacher was capable of operationalizing the learning goals of this clinical placement.	4.10 ± 0.59
28. The nurse teacher helped me to reduce the theory-practice gap.	4.18 ± 0.55
29. The nurse teacher was like a member of the nursing team.	4.00 ± 0.45
30. The nurse teacher was capable of giving his/her pedagogical expertise to the clinical team.	4.05 ± 0.64
31. The nurse teacher and the clinical team worked together to support my learning	4.10 ± 0.71
32. The common meetings between myself, my mentor, and nurse teacher were comfortable experiences.	4.10 ± 0.67
33. The climate of the meetings was congenial.	4.00 ± 0.68
34. Focus on the meetings was in my learning needs.	4.03 ± 0.66
Total	**4.11 ± 0.12**

Table II: Mean score of clinical learning environment, supervision, and nurse teacher sub-dimensions of the nursing students

Level of Satisfaction (N = 40)	Frequency (%)
High (>133.80)	21 (52.50)
Low (≤ 133.80)	19 (47.50)

Table III: Level of Overall Satisfaction with Clinical Learning Environment among Nursing Students

The Chi-square test of association did not show any statistically significant association between the level of satisfaction and age, marital status, last clinical placement ward, frequency of meeting nurse teachers, and use of e-communication tools with nursing teachers (Table IV).

Variables (N = 40)	Level of Satisfaction		χ2	p-value
	Low (%)	High (%)		
Age				
≤ 20 years	17 (48.60)	18 (51.40)	0.13	0.72

> 20 years	2 (40.00)	3 (60.00)		
Marital Status				
Married	1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	0.005	0.94
Unmarried	18 (47.40)	20 (52.60)		
Last Clinical Placement Ward				
Postnatal	3 (50.00)	3 (50.00)	0.59	0.96
Pediatric	2 (50.00)	2 (50.00)		
Neonatal ICU	1 (33.30)	2 (66.70)		
Labor	7 (53.80)	6 (46.20)		
Gynecology	6 (42.90)	8 (57.10)		
Frequency of Meeting Nurse Teachers				
1 – 3 times	3 (37.50)	5 (62.50)	0.4	0.52
> 3 times	16 (50.00)	16 (50.00)		
Use of e-communication Tools with Nursing Teachers				
Never	11 (68.8)	5 (31.30)	5.13	0.07
1 – 3 times	4 (40.00)	6 (60.00)		
> 3 times	4 (28.60)	10 (71.40)		

Table IV: Association between Level of Satisfaction in Clinical Learning Environment and Selected Variables of Nursing Students

DISCUSSION

The current study was conducted to measure satisfaction with the clinical learning environment among proficiency certificate level nursing students from the Nepalgunj Nursing Campus using the clinical learning environment, supervision, and nurse teacher tool. The result shows that more than half of the students are highly satisfied with their clinical learning environment which is similar to the findings of the study conducted in Nepal in 2020.[5]

Among the five dimensions of the clinical learning environment, supervision, and nurse teacher tool, satisfaction was highest in the role of nurse teacher (4.11 ± 0.12) followed by satisfaction towards the role of supervisory relationship (4.04 ± 0.06) which is similar to the findings of a study done by Dhakal et al.[6] This supports the notion that one of the major roles of teachers is to support their students in their quest for new knowledge on a specified set of subjects. The satisfaction towards the pedagogical atmosphere was reported to be the least in our study which is similar to the study by Nepal et al.[7]

The study findings did not show any statistically significant association between the level of satisfaction and age, marital status, last clinical placement ward, frequency of meeting nurse teachers, and use of e-communication tools which differs from other studies that found the association to be statistically significant.[2,6,7] The study by Dsouza et al[2] showed that students who were posted in the Gynecology ward were highly satisfied with the clinical learning environment. This difference in findings may be due to the small sample size used in this study (N=40) compared to the other studies which used a higher sample size.[2,6,7] Additionally, the data was collected from only one college for this study as compared to the study by Dhakal et al which utilized multiple colleges for data collection.[6] Moreover, all the student participants come from a similar background academically and socio-economically which might have some influence on the students' perception.

CONCLUSION

The Clinical Learning Environment, Supervision, and Nurse Teacher Scale can be very useful in assessing satisfaction with the Clinical Learning Environment among nursing students which could lay the foundation to evaluate the current academic method used by nursing institutions as well as introduce new models and improvise the current ones. In today's education system, which is centered on students' learning concepts and expectations, assessing the students' satisfaction level can be one of the innovative ways to bring positive changes to both the students' and teachers' experiences. However, the availability of limited research studies on this matter, makes it hard to draw any conclusions. Hence, future studies should focus on identifying the various factors influencing the satisfaction level of students with clinical learning.

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