

Nursing Students' Perception of Instructors' Caring Behaviors in Tabriz University of Medical Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Caring behaviors of clinical teachers is one of the most important and influential factors in the process of clinical instruction, so far has not been paid enough attention. In other words, there has been so little research done in this area, so that the researchers couldn't present the clear image of caring dimensions. Therefore, the present study was conducted to determine nursing students' perception of instructors' caring behavior.

Methods: This descriptive study was conducted upon 3rd- 8th semester nursing students in Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Iran. The participants were selected through stratified random sampling method. The data were collected using Wade and Kasper inventory for nursing students' perception of instructor caring (NSPIC) (n=240). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS13 software.

Results: The level of nursing instructors' caring behavior during teaching students was medium to high with the mean and standard deviation of 4.65 (0.93), as the highest level belonged to the respectful sharing, and then respectively, instill confidence through caring, appreciation of life meanings, supportive learning climate, and control versus flexibility.

Conclusion: The results obtained in this study demonstrate that there is a gap in some dimension in order to achieve optimum about instructors' caring behaviors. Examining and identifying the influential factors in this regard, and applying effective strategies by relevant authorities will be effective in qualitative promotion of clinical teaching.

Introduction

Caring is actually a fundamental concept in nursing, and manifests openness and honesty in the humanitarian area and the core of nursing science.¹ Caring is the heart and soul of nursing, and people expect caring more than any other thing from nurses.² Caring in nursing consists of two key dimensions, namely, physical and mental. The psychosocial caring behaviors result in building confidence, accepting the feelings, faith, and honesty.³ It is decades since

Florence Nightingale's time that scientists have been studying the nature, definition, and assessment of nursing: Is caring a science? And how can "caring" be taught?⁴

Having perceived the importance of caring in nursing teaching, students can learn professionalism.⁵ A major part of nursing students' courses are taught in hospitals under the supervision of various clinical instructors.⁶ Clinical instructors are the fundamental important agents in programming and acquiring clinical experiences,⁷ because they can also establish

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the discipline and be a supportive agent for building students' effective communication, students' accountability and effective acquisition of scientific and clinical skills, and reducing their fear and anxiety through providing students with suitable corrective feedback and active presence as a source of reassurance and confidence.⁸

The nursing instructors are responsible for developing nursing curricula and using active learning strategies that will help students to learn caring behavior.⁹ It is obvious that the clinical instructors preparing their students for entering clinical workplaces must meet the caring behaviors.¹⁰

Previous studies showed that caring behaviors played an important role in dynamism of instructor-student relationship.^{11,12} In 2006, Wade and Kasper found that when instructors were taken as caring individuals, students also developed their own caring abilities. According to Wade, five special caring factors were effective in nursing students' perception of instructor caring, including instill confidence through caring, supportive learning climate, appreciation of life meanings, control versus flexibility, and respectful sharing.⁵ Based on Watson's theory of care, caring was represented by instructors and perceived by students in order to facilitate the acquisition of professional role, caring attitude, clinical self-confidence, clinical competency, and interpersonal caring interactions in students.^{2,10}

Students learn caring through copying instructors' caring behaviors and experiencing caring within their interactions with instructors and other students.¹³

Moreover, students perceive the presence or absence of support according to the type of contacts and feedbacks receiving from their instructors,¹⁴ to students, instructors are individuals encouraging them, helping them to express their feelings, and inspiring them the self-confidence.¹⁵ Furthermore, students make the flexibility,¹¹ kindness, respectfulness, and being encouraging as the

characteristics of instructor caring behaviors, and they take the humiliation, rudeness, negligence, and unavailability as instructor non-caring behaviors.¹² The instructor non-caring behavior arouses negative feelings in students, including ostracism, dissuasion, lost confidence, hopelessness, emotional turmoil,¹⁶ and increased anxiety.¹⁷ Wang Letzkus believed that instructors could influence student learning positively and reduce the anxiety and loss of interest in learning through increasing self-confidence, improving interpersonal relationships, and help better understanding of the role of education and becoming interested in education, and therefore, students felt more freely to ask questions or ask for help from instructors.¹¹

Unfortunately, the studies conducted in Iran revealed that there was not much success in clinical education. For instance, the instructors' failure to support students (90.66%) was reported as one of the prominent problems in clinical education in the area of clinical instructors.¹⁸ Moreover, students took instructors' behaviors "awkward and hostile",¹⁹ as the instructors did not only reduce students' stress in the clinical environment but also increased students' stress²⁰ and anxiety.²¹ Furthermore, instructors' inappropriate reaction to students' errors and unfair assessment made nursing students disappointed and unmotivated.²² The absence of interest and motivation in students are of important barriers to the clinical education.²³

The results of current study is indicative the outcome of clinical instruction and influential factors in it. Since caring behaviors of clinical teachers is one of the most important and influential factors in the process of clinical instruction, so far has not been paid enough attention. In other words, there has been so little research done in this area, so that the researchers couldn't present the clear image of caring dimensions. Therefore, the present study was conducted to determine the nursing students' perception

of instructors' caring behaviors in Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, 2013.

Materials and methods

This descriptive study was performed to determine the nursing students' perception of instructor caring behaviors in School of Nursing and Midwifery, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences. The participants were 160 nursing Bachelor of Science students selected from the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth semesters. All the male and female BS students who were educating in 3rd-8th semesters under the supervision of the clinical instructor were included in the study.

Guest and transitional students and those working in the healthcare system were excluded from the study.

The data were collected by using an inventory for nursing students' perception of instructor caring (NSPIC) that assessed clinical instructor caring behaviors. This instrument was developed by Wade and contains 31 statements in 5 sections, including instill confidence through caring (11 statements), supportive learning climate (10 statements), appreciation of life meanings (3 statements), control versus flexibility (4 statements), and respectful sharing (3 statements). The answers were assessed using a 6-point Likert scale with options of strongly disagree (1 point) to strongly agree (6 point). Moreover, a demographics questionnaire was developed and given to the participants.⁵

Based on Wade's studies, the five caring dimensions were interpreted according to Watson's ten carative factors as follows: instill confidence through caring was manifested through showing interest in caring patients, kindness, inspiring a sense of hope to the future, and feeling capable; supportive learning climate was expressed through supporting in stressful conditions and allowing students to express their feelings, accepting their feelings, and accountability toward students' needs;

appreciation of life meanings was reflected through honoring others' viewpoint, spiritual aspects, and students' experiences; control versus flexibility was shown through giving breaks to students, flexibility in unexpected conditions, satisfying needs, and not using students' grades for controlling them; and respectful sharing was evaluated based on showing respect and attention to students and not imposing ideas on students.

According to Wade's study, the NSPIC inventory was evaluated and confirmed through the content, predictive, and convergent validity and factor analysis; and the Cronbach's alpha for the 31 statements was reported as 0.97 that indicated the inventory was a "confident, valid and reliable measurement indicator" for measuring nursing students' perception of the instructor caring.⁵ The ethnological method was used to determine the accuracy of the translation.²⁴

Five instructors who had a good command of both English and Persian and were not involved in the translation process determined the accuracy of the translation, and the necessary modifications were applied after receiving their suggestions and opinions. The validity of the inventory was evaluated through content validity and survey of ten faculty members of Tabriz School of Nursing and Midwifery, and the corrective opinions were applied. In order to examine the reliability of questionnaire, test-retest reliability was used. The participants were 10 nursing students who did the questionnaire twice with two weeks' time interval. Then Pearson Correlation Coefficient in order to examine the reliability of questionnaire was estimated ($r=0.94$).

In order to estimate the sample size in present study, the pilot study conducted upon 10 nursing students. By calculating confidence interval 95% CI (3.4, 5.5) and $\alpha=0.05$ among 267 student population. Since random sampling method was proportional stratified, 40 students from 3rd semester and 40 ones from 4th semester as well as 20 students from 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th semesters

(actually 20 ones from each term) were randomly selected. For the students of the 3rd and 4th semesters, only one instructor was assessed due to the low number of clinical instructors in lower semesters. However, two clinical instructors of the 5th to 8th semesters were assessed due to the multitude of clinical instructors. The researcher wrote the name of the clinical instructors on the inventories randomly, and the students were requested to reflect on the clinical instructor they recently worked with and express the level of their agreement with each option. Finally, 240 questionnaire containing demographics data and students' perception of clinical instructor caring behaviors were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and interval confidence of 95%) in SPSS13 software. This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences (Code Number. 140).

Results

In current study, the mean and standard

deviation of participants age was 21.70 (1.47) and all 240 distributed questionnaires, have been handed in by participants. Results related to demographics characteristics of nursing student showed that most of them 50.4% were male, 91.2% were single, 67.5% were non-native and 64.6% were residence in dormitory.

As indicated in Table 1, the results showed that the total mean score (standard deviation) for the clinical instructor caring behaviors was 4.65 out of 6, as the maximum and minimum mean was respectively related to the respectful sharing and control versus flexibility. These statistics revealed that the "respectful sharing" behavior was always shown by the instructors, and behaviors, such as "control versus flexibility" was shown scarcely. Although the mean for caring behaviors was above the medium level, the analysis of the 0.95 confidence interval showed a gap to reach a more favorable status.

Table 1. Nursing students' perception of instructors' caring behaviors

Dimensions of caring behavior	Mean (SD)*	Confidence interval of 95%
Respectful sharing	5.22 (1.20)	5.07, 5.37
Instill confidence through caring	4.73 (1.01)	4.60, 4.86
Appreciation of life meanings	4.54 (1.23)	4.38, 4.69
Supportive learning climate	4.53 (1.06)	4.39, 4.66
Control versus flexibility	4.41 (1.13)	4.27, 4.56
Total	4.65 (0.93)	4.53, 4.77

*Standard Deviation

Discussion

Based on the results, the total mean for caring behaviors was above the medium level from the nursing students' viewpoint, and this showed that the clinical instructors

deeply paid attention to their caring behaviors for students, although the instructor caring behaviors needed to be promoted. It was emphasized that student caring abilities developed as much as the

instructor's attention to caring got deeper.⁵ Moreover, among the caring behaviors, the "respectful sharing" was at higher levels than other 4 dimensions, and this result revealed that the instructors showed "respectful sharing" more than other behaviors and largely emphasized on this dimension. As the need to being respected is one of the basic needs of humans in Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid, it can facilitate students' achievement of educational goals.²⁵

This study aims at examining nursing students' perception of instructors' caring behaviors on the basis of five caring dimensions by Wade's inventory for nursing students' perception of instructor caring (NSPIC). The results also have been presented on the basis of this caring dimension. While the results of previous research studies had been reported on the basis of, age, gender and grade. Therefore, the researcher refers to the results of research studies done on this regard.

The results of Wade and Kasper study in Pennsylvania on 88 nursing students of the last year and 43 nursing students of the third year with the mean age of 23 (4.79) years and female percentage of 92.2% showed the total mean of 224.75 (49.6) for the clinical instructor caring behaviors (the calculation method of mean in this study was different from that in the present study). The above total mean was higher than that of the present study, and Wade's study did not provide results for each dimension.⁵

Results of Wang Letzkus study performed in California on 138 nursing students of the third year and 101 nursing students of the last year from 5 academic semesters with the mean age of 24.51(4.72) years and female percentage of 91.2% from three large nursing schools revealed the total mean for the clinical instructor caring behaviors as 4.96(0.69), which was higher than that of the present study and did not conform to the present study. In the above study, the maximum and minimum mean was

respectively related to instill confidence through caring and appreciation of life meanings,¹¹ and this result did not agree with that of the present study.

Furthermore, Clawson Roe's study performed in New Orleans on 199 nursing students from 5 academic semesters with the mean age of 25 years and female percentage of 85% indicated the total mean for the clinical instructor caring behaviors as 3.77(0.42), which was lower than that of the present study, and maximum and minimum mean was respectively related to instill confidence through caring and appreciation of life meanings¹², and these results did not conform to those of the present study.

Results of Nelson's study conducted in New York on 503 nursing students of who mostly were female showed the total mean for the clinical instructor caring behaviors as 4.57(1.1), which was lower than that of the present study. The maximum and minimum mean was respectively related to instill confidence through caring and appreciation of life meanings², and this result did not agree with that of the present study.

Wafaa's study performed in Saudi Arabia, on 113 students of 4 academic semesters showed the total mean of 107.69 (21.87) for the clinical instructor caring behaviors (the calculation method of mean in this study was different from that in the present study). The above total mean was lower than that of the present study. According to the students in the above study, instructors' ability in "respectful sharing" was higher than other abilities, and this result conformed to that of the present study. Unlike the present study, the students in the above study introduced the "appreciation of life meanings" at a high level after the respectful sharing, while they put the "control versus flexibility" at a lower level,¹⁰ which was similar to that of the present study.

The variation in results and students' expectations about the clinical instructor caring behavior can be justified with regard to the point that the students' underlying

variables, such as demographics variables (age and sex) affect their perception of instructor caring behaviors.² Therefore, students' different characteristics influence their perception of caring behaviors. Besides personal differences, the effect of emotional problems, and level of knowledge, students' attitudes and previous experiences, Because clinical instruction is a dynamic process that happens in different social and cultural fields.¹⁵ These various point of views can be the results of cultural differences in different countries and also differences in nursing educational system. May be this nursing educational system is not like Iran in many countries. It seems that these factors can be affected the difference of nursing students' perception of instructors' caring behaviors. Instructors should aware of the above differences and take account of them to achieve better consequences.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that reformation is necessary in order to solve the problems of different caring dimension. Actually, this reformation will improve the quality of education. The results of this study are limited to a sample population of nursing students who were studying in nursing and midwifery faculty of Tabriz University. Whether the same findings would be found at other universities remains unknown. So, this study can be repeated in other state and private universities. Considering instructors' demographic characteristics will affect the outcomes of clinical instruction and was not perused in this study, we suggest carrying out and paying enough attention to this case in the future studies.

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Ethical issues

None to be declared.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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