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Cover Page Footnote

The authors acknowledge the experts Dr Asha P Shetty, Dr Girijja S Nair, Dr Ferdous Jean, Dr Huda Hamdan, and Dr Gina M Lim who validated the tool. We are thankful to the students of MOH Nursing Institutes in the North Batinah region of Oman, who willingly participated in the study. Sincere thanks to the Dean, Mr Ahmad Faraj, colleagues, Mr.Rudy Dokey, Ms Syeda Syadath Unissa, and other faculty members, as without their support our study would not have been possible

Students' perceptions of effective clinical teaching skills and teacher behaviours on learning

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Abstract

Introduction: Defining what clinical teaching skills and behaviours are effective in influencing student learning is a challenging task. **Objective:** To identify the nursing students' perception of effective clinical teaching skills and teacher behaviours, and its influence on learning in the clinical setting. **Method:** A descriptive correlative design was used for the study. A convenient sample of 110 nursing students of the Ministry of Health (MOH) Nursing Institutes completed a five point Likert Scale. **Results:** Overall, students perceived that all clinical teaching skills and behaviours are important as their average rating ranged from 3.56 to 4.11 and 3.82 to 4.27, respectively. However, providing frequent timely feedback in student's performance ($M=4.11$) and observing frequently their clinical skills ($M=4.10$), being honest with the students ($M=4.27$), demonstrating excellent communicating skills ($M=4.26$) were perceived to be the most important effective Clinical Teaching skills and behaviours. In addition, students' collaboration with other health team members ($M=3.95$), teacher being available all the time in the clinical setting ($M=3.93$) were perceived to influence the learning. A significant correlation was found between the mean scores of perception of effective Clinical Teaching skills with their degree of influence on their learning ($p<.05$). The students of year II to year III significantly differed ($p<.008$) in their perceptions of effective Clinical Teaching skills. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that clinical learning is greatly affected by clinical teachers who manifest effective Clinical Teaching skills and teacher behaviours.

Key words: Student's perception, effective Clinical Teaching, teacher behaviours, influence on learning

Introduction

Advancement in technology, extended and expanded the roles of nurses and, have made the nursing profession extremely challenging. The quality of nursing education depends largely on the quality of the clinical training that the student nurses receive during their clinical experience. Effective clinical teaching is critical for producing knowledgeable, competent, and skilful nurses who can deliver safe quality nursing services to individual families and communities, give real world experience, and develop good interpersonal

relationship with others (Kaphagawani & Useh, 2013; Smedley, 2008 and Ousey, 2000).

It is evident from literature that a gap exist in integrating theory and practice (Papathanasiou, Tsaras & Sarafis, 2014) and in providing an enriched teaching and learning environment in the clinical to help produce effective learning outcomes for students (Smedley and Morey 2010; Dinham, 2007; Robinson & Timperley, 2007). A clinical teacher not only enables students to integrate knowledge and skills associated with caring for patients but also provides learners opportunities to internalize the role of nurses as a caregiver (Buchel & Edwards, 2005). It has been identified, during the review of literature that the Clinical Teaching skills and behaviours of a clinical teacher have been studied as a single entity. However, in this study an attempt has been made to distinguish between the two. The term

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Clinical Teaching skills is interpreted as the ability of the clinical teacher to apply different teaching mechanisms to enhance students' clinical learning and clinical teacher behaviour refers to those qualities or characteristics of the teacher that are perceived to facilitate students' learning. Clinical teachers' are expected to match their Clinical Teaching skills to the students' level of understanding and experience (Levy, et al., 2009).

There have been numerous attempts to describe the perceptions of students regarding what skills and behaviours of a clinical teacher are found most helpful in the clinical learning such as; clinical teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, clinical competencies, teaching ability (Ismail, Aboushady & Eswi, 2016), organizational skills, honesty with students, motivation to teach, supervising effectively, being a role model, demonstrating excellent communication skills (Kaphagawani & Useh, 2013), enthusiasm to teach, autonomy, independence, providing constructive timely feedback, flexibility to change, non-judgmental attitude and adaptability to individual teaching needs (Ming, Mingxia, Hongxia & Haobin, 2009 ; Tang, Chou & Chiang, 2005).

Nursing students' perceptions and experiences have been studied as the method of measuring effective clinical instructor's characteristics in nursing education (Ismail et al., 2016). Many studies (Ismail et al., 2016; Madhavanprabhakaran, Shukri & Hayudini, 2013; Ming et al., 2009) have established that an understanding of students' perceptions helped to identify the changes needed in the clinical setting for proper learning to take place.

The approaches of most studies reviewed appear to have used mostly quantitative and a few qualitative methods. In addition, Clinical Teacher Effectiveness Inventory (CTEI) was widely used. However, many studies elicited student's view (Ismail et al., 2016; Madhavanprabhakaran et al., 2013; Goldsby, 2010; Ming et al., 2009), teacher's view (Chow, 2001; Bergmna & Gaitskill, 1999), on effective Clinical Teaching skills and teacher behaviours and, used those terms interchangeably. Whereas, only few studies (Papathanasiou et al. 2014; Kube, 2010) highlighted the

influence of these on the student's learning and most of the studies mentioned above were conducted in western countries with a few in the region of Oman and none in the context of nursing students under MOH Nursing Institutes. Moreover, MOH Nursing Institutes in Oman are in a transitional phase of establishing a Baccalaureate Nursing programme through phasing out of the Diploma in General Nursing. In an attempt to standardize and benchmark the new Baccalaureate Nursing programme with the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and western countries, new by-laws dealing with effective Clinical Teaching skills and behaviours are being developed. Hence, there is an urgent and compelling need to gain a deeper understanding of students' viewpoints on what constitute the effective Clinical Teaching skills and the teacher behaviours to influence their learning.

Materials and Methods

A cross sectional descriptive correlative design was used to identify the Nursing students' perception of effective Clinical Teaching skills, effective clinical teacher behaviours, and its influence on learning. A convenient sample of 110 was drawn from Diploma nursing students of Ministry of Health (MOH) institutes in North Batinah region, Sultanate of Oman. Data was collected using a 5-Point Likert Scale that was constructed after reviewing the related literature. Five experts in the nursing education for the content validity revised the prepared tool. The content validity index was .90. The reliability of the 5-Point Likert scale was established using Cronbach's alpha. The coefficient alpha(α) was .967, .896, .978, and .886 for the Part II a, Part II b, Part III a, and Part III b, respectively. The final tool had:

Part I: Demographic profile –that contained four items.

Part II: Two sections to be filled in two stages. Part II (a) had 19 items to be rated on left hand side of the tool regarding the perception of how important these items for an effective clinical teaching to occur from the most important (5-Point) to the not important (1 point) on a continuum of fivepoint scale. And on the right hand side, Part II (b), the same items are to

be rated regarding the perception on the degree of influence these effective Clinical Teaching skills on their learning from the highest degree (5-Point) to lowest degree (1-Point) on a continuum.

Part III: This part of the tool also had two parts and, it consisted of 20 items of effective clinical teacher behaviours to be rated twice the same as that of part II (a) and (b).

A Pilot study was conducted using 10 samples from other similar Nursing Institutes in Oman to check the feasibility of the study. No changes in the methodology or the tool were made after the pilot study.

Permission from the Research Ethical Review and Approval Committee (RERAC-NBG) was obtained prior to the study. Permission was also obtained from the Dean and the time for data collection was fixed after consultation with the respective Class Coordinators. A written informed consent was obtained from the students under study after explaining the purpose of the study, the risk, and benefits involved in participating in it. Students were assured of the confidentiality of the data. Data was collected from Year II and III students of the two nursing Institutes in the North Batinah Region who met the inclusion criteria of having more than two clinical exposures. Final data collection was

done on July 7 and 8, 2015. The researchers in both Institutes for the Second and Third year students administered the tool, simultaneously. The average time taken to complete the tool was about 20 minutes.

Results

Data in Table 1 shows that the majority respondents (54.5%) were in the age group of 18 to 21 years with a majority 81.8% females and 52.72% of students were in year III Diploma Nursing and 59.1% of them were exposed to clinical areas for more than six times.

Table 1 also shows that the differences in the perception of students from Year II to Year III with regard to effective clinical teaching skills was significant ($P < .008$) indicating that year II and III students differed in their perceptions regarding the effective clinical teaching skills.

Table 2 shows that students perceived all the effective clinical teacher skills and their degree of influence on learning as very important as shown by their average rating ranged from 3.56 to 4.11 and 3.5 to 3.95, respectively. However, providing frequent timely feedback on students' performance, observing their clinical skill frequently and facilitating learning by creating a link between theory and practice in the clinical setting were perceived to be the important effective

Table 1:
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students According to Demographic Variables

N=110

Demographic variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	p value Effective teaching skills	p value Effective teacher behaviours
Age in years				
18-21	60	54.5	.644	.690
22-24	48	44.5		
≥24	1	.9		
Gender				
Male	20	18.2	.793	.507
Female	90	81.8		
Year enrolled				
Year II	52	47.3	.008*	.230
Year III	58	52.72		
Total number of exposure to clinical areas				
Two to three times	21	19.1	.709	.637
Four to five times	24	21.8		
Six times and above	65	59.1		

*Significant ($p < .05$)

Table 2:

Average Rating Scores of Perceived Effective Clinical Teaching Skills and their Degree of Influence on their Learning

N=110

Effective Clinical Teaching skills	Average rating scores of perceived effective clinical teaching skills	Average rating scores of perceived degree of influence on their learning
Stating clearly the students' learning objectives and her expectations at the clinical setting	3.83	3.86
Demonstrating knowledge and expertise during the clinical sessions	3.93	3.84
Facilitating student collaboration with members of Healthcare teams	3.93	3.93
Assigning procedure or assignment appropriate for my skill level	3.96	3.86
Holding regular pre and post clinical conferences	3.6	3.53
Enhancing students' development of clinical reasoning skills	3.84	3.73
Providing specific practice opportunity	3.83	3.84
Adopting innovative strategies of bedside teaching to stimulate my interest in the clinical setting (Quiz critical thinking scenarios etc.)	3.65	3.5
Facilitating learning by creating a link between the theory and practice in the clinical setting	4.09	3.86
Providing sufficient time to complete my assignments	4.08	3.51
Providing frequent timely feedback on students' performance	4.11	3.86
Observing my clinical skill frequently	4.1	3.82
Organizing clinical learning experiences from simple to complex	3.82	3.57
Questioning me to elicit underlying reasoning	3.56	3.58
Providing direct supervision	3.66	3.61
Utilising teaching and evaluative practices that promote student self-directed learning	3.82	3.69
Being aware of individual differences and self-limitations	3.71	3.67
Creates supportive work environment	3.97	3.77
Collaborating with other health team members	3.95	3.95

Descriptive Equivalence of: 4.3-5 –Most Important: 3.5-4.2- Very Important: 2.7-3.4 –Important: 1.9-2.6 Slight Important: 1-1.8 Least Important

Table 3:

Average Rating Scores of Perceived Effective Clinical Teaching Behaviours and their Degree of Influence on their Learning

N=110

Effective clinical teacher behaviour	Perceived average rating effective clinical teacher behaviour	Perceived average rating of degree of influences on their learning
Demonstrates enthusiasm to teach and share professional and personal experiences	3.9	3.85
Provides constructive and timely feedback	3.97	3.89
Is available all the time in the clinical setting	3.79	3.93
Shows mutual respect for student's views and opinions	4.13	3.82
Flexible to the needs of the student	4.14	3.76
Honest with the student	4.27	3.9
Fair in evaluating and grading	3.98	3.65
Interacts positively with the students	3.96	3.73
Promotes student independence	4.02	3.89
Open -minded and non-judgmental	3.91	3.6
Appears organised	3.85	3.85
A good role model	4.08	3.88
Respects the confidentiality of student relationship	4.24	3.84
Demonstrates excellent communication skills	4.26	3.87
Exhibits autonomy	3.95	3.76
Approachable	3.82	3.85
A good listener	4.09	3.88
Demonstrates Empathy	3.93	3.67
Self-confident and trustworthy	4.24	3.93
Has a good sense of humour	4.03	3.75

Descriptive equivalence 4.3-5- Most important: 3.5-4.2- Very important: 2.7-3.4-important: 1.9-2.6 Slight important: 1-1.8 Least important

teaching skills as their average rating was 4.11, 4.10, and 4.9, respectively. On the other hand, collaborating with other health team members, facilitating student collaboration with members of Healthcare teams were rated to be the first and second important skills to influence their clinical learning (average rating of 3.95 and 3.93), respectively. Students also perceived that providing frequent timely feedback on their performance, assigning procedure or assignment appropriate for their skill level and stating clearly the student's learning objectives and her expectations at the clinical setting were rated to be the third important clinical teaching skills perceived to influence their learning (Average rating of 3.86 each).

Table 3 shows that students also perceived all the effective clinical teacher behaviours and their degree of influence on their learning as very important as shown by their average rating scores ranged from 3.82 to 4.27 and 3.6 to 3.93, respectively. However, being honest with the student and demonstrating excellent communication skills were perceived to be the first and second important effective clinical teacher behaviours with an average rating of 4.27 and 4.26, respectively. In addition, respecting the confidentiality of student relationship and being self-confident and trustworthy were rated to be the third important behaviours (average rating of 4.24 each). Table 3 also indicates that teacher being available all the time in the clinical setting, being self-confident and trustworthy (average rating of 3.93 each) followed by being honest with the students was the first and second important clinical teacher behaviours perceived to influence their learning (average rating of 3.9).

Relationship between 1) Mean scores of effective Clinical Teaching skills and their degree of influence on learning

2) Mean Scores of effective clinical teacher behaviours and their degree of influence on learning

To find the significant relationship the Persons Correlation "r" was calculated.

Table 4 shows that the calculated p-value for perceived effective clinical skills and the degree of influence on their learning ($p=.00$) is lower than .05 level of

significance. Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the mean scores of effective clinical teaching skills and their influence on learning; however, the relationship is weak as indicated by r -value of .337. This indicates that effective clinical teaching skills greatly influenced their learning.

Table 4:
Mean Standard deviation and Pearson's Correlations to Effective Clinical Teaching Skills, Behaviours, and their Influences on Learning
N=110

Scores	Mean \pm SD	Pearson Correlation "r"	p value
Perceived effective clinical teaching skills	3.86 \pm .71	.337	.00*
Perceived degree of influence of effective clinical teaching skills on learning	3.74 \pm .73		
Perceived effective clinical teacher behaviours	4.05 \pm .81	.051	.598
Perceived degree of influence of effective clinical teacher behaviours on learning	3.81 \pm .75		

*Significant ($p < .05$)

It is also evident from Table 4 that the calculated p -value for perceived effective clinical teacher behaviours and the degree of influence on their learning ($p=.598$) is greater than the .05 level of significance. Hence, concluded that there is no significant relationship between the effective clinical teacher behaviours and their degree of influence on learning. This implies that although students valued effective clinical teacher behaviours as very important to influence on their learning but statistically not found significant.

Discussion

Findings of this study revealed that students perceived all the effective teaching skills and behaviours, which influenced their learning as very important. The findings of the study are consistent with the findings reported by the various researchers on the perceived effective clinical teaching skills and teacher behaviours to promote the effective clinical instruction which includes, providing frequent and timely feedback in students' performance, observing their clinical skills frequently, being honest with the

students and demonstrating excellent communicating skills (Okoronkw, Onyia-Pat, Agbo, Okpala, & Ndu, 2013; Ming et al., 2009; Buchel & Edwards, 2005). In addition, students felt facilitating learning by creating a link between the theory and the practice in the clinical setting, providing sufficient time to complete their assignments and creating supportive work environment were very important teaching skills (Elcigil & Sari, 2011; Kelly, 2007; Nahas, Nour & Al-Nobani, 1999). The teacher behaviours, which the students perceived to be important, were supervizing students effectively, being a good role model and a fair evaluator (Okoronkw et al, 2013; Madhavanprabhakaran et al., 2013). This finding suggests that personal attributes of the teacher play a role in effective teaching. Our study results also highly valued that student's collaboration with other health team members and teacher being available all the time in the clinical setting influenced their learning the most. Interesting differences were observed with other studies, which were contradicting to our findings such as, stimulating students' involvement and appropriately encouraging independence were the most important perceived effective clinical teaching characteristics (Smith, Swain & Penprase, 2011). In addition, another study also indicated that the effective behaviours are what the student would like to see in their clinical teacher (Al Hamdan, Fowler, Bawadi, Norrie & Summer, 2014). The results of our study also, added to the findings of the other studies which reported that the correlation of student's perception of effective Clinical Teaching skills with the degree of influence on their learning was statistically significant (Ismail et al., 2016; Okoronkw et al, 2013). The findings suggest that the students strongly perceive that effective Clinical Teaching skills and behaviours facilitate their learning in the clinical area.

Although a clinical teacher is responsible to generate graduates equipped with competencies identified by the Baccalaureate Nursing Program, shortage of the faculty many a times warrants the nurse preceptors to take over the job of a clinical teacher. That might hinder the learning process among the students. Hence, the educational setting for the clinical learning need to be tailored to students' needs based on their perceptions and expectations from their clinical teachers.

Future research should address the comparison of the perceptions of both the students and the teachers on what constitutes an effective teacher to foster clinical learning among the students under the umbrella of MOH nursing and other paramedical institutes. The results of this study can be used as the indicators for the clinical teacher appraisal and hiring future clinical teachers too. However, the present study was conducted in North Batinah region of Oman, so study findings are restricted to small sample size hence, generalisation is limited. The results cannot be generalized to students' perception in the Private Nursing Schools in Oman. The expressions of students' views and perceptions assumed to be true representative of their overall clinical experiences and not a single isolated incident.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the clinical learning is influenced by the clinical teachers who manifest effective clinical teaching skills and behaviour. The results of this study provide impetus for all clinical teachers to examine their own practice and introspect their behaviours against the best practice and there is a need to plan in-service education programmes for nurse preceptors who take a role of clinical teachers in their absence in the clinical areas to ensure student learning. Hence, incorporating the characteristics of effective clinical teaching skills and clinical teacher behaviour into routine teacher performance planning and evaluation could serve to be a valuable strategy to enhance the quality of clinical teaching in nursing.

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