Nurse Students versus Faculty Staff Assistants Perception Regarding to Teaching Behaviors in Clinical Setting

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Abstract

Background: Effective teaching behaviors are identified as important factors in nurse students and faculty staff assistants' relationship. **Aim:** Identify nursing students' perception regarding teaching behaviors of their faculty staff assistants in clinical setting, determine faculty staff assistants' perception regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting, compare among perceptions of nursing students and faculty staff assistants regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting. **Design:** Descriptive, cross-sectional, comparative research design was used. **Setting:** The study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing Ain-Shams University. **Subjects:** 355 nurse student and 55 faculty staff assistant. **Tools:** Data were collected using two tools; Nurse Students' perception regarding teaching behaviors questionnaire sheet and faculty staff assistants' perception regarding teaching behaviors questionnaire sheet. **Results:** Regarding effective teaching characteristics, nurse students perceived evaluation procedures as the most important dimension while personality traits are the lowest dimension. Regarding caring behaviors, nurse students perceived instills confidence as the highest demonstrated caring behaviors while control versus flexibility as the lowest demonstrated caring behaviors. Regarding effective teaching characteristics, faculty staff assistants perceived evaluation procedures as the most important dimension while personality traits are the lowest dimension. Regarding caring behaviors, faculty staff assistants perceived instills confidence as the highest demonstrated caring behaviors while supportive learning climate as the lowest demonstrated caring behaviors. Data revealed that nurse students and faculty staff assistants had a positive perception of teaching behaviors in clinical setting for all components. **Conclusion:** Although there is a positive perception from both study subjects regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting, there is a highly statistically significant difference between their perceptions. **Recommendations:** Providing support and encouragement for nurse students in the clinical setting. Continuous support and reward from the faculty for effective performance of faculty staff assistants.

Key words: Faculty staff assistants, nurse students, teaching behaviors.

Introduction

Teaching is a process of helping another person to learn and involves interaction between students and teachers under teacher responsibility in order to bring about expected change in students' behaviors. Teaching is considered to be facilitating rather than controlling, so, it occurs within a climate of trust and caring where learners are supported as they enter into learning process (**Gaberson et al., 2015**).

The basic aim of nursing students' learning is to practice skills and demonstrate vital procedures that are the foundation of clinical teaching. Clinical teaching is a form of interpersonal communication between teacher and a learner. The teaching learning process is a human transaction involving the teacher, learner and learning group in a set of dynamic interrelationships **(Jackson, 2015).**

Effective clinical teaching requires clinical teachers who able to demonstrate effective teaching behaviors during monitoring their students in the clinical setting. During training in the clinical setting, nursing students face many persons as patients, nurses, doctors and other health care providers. Nursing students can't provide proper care without acquiring sufficient knowledge and skills from their nursing instructors **(Ismail et al., 2015)**.

Teaching behaviors are those actions and activities of clinical faculty members that facilitate student learning in the clinical setting. The clinical teachers have an extremely significant influence on students' clinical experiences. In the last four decades, studies of clinical teaching effectiveness focused primarily on the teaching behaviors of clinical nursing faculty. In clinical setting, nurse students learn from the behavior, knowledge, experience, and skills of their clinical instructor **(Rehan, 2012).**

The responsibility of the faculty staff assistants is not only to give knowledge and skills to the students in a clinical setting but also realize their students to be care giver to the patients. The teaching behaviors of clinical faculty members play an important role to prepare a competent nurse. Studies have revealed that effective clinical teacher behavior can enhance students' learning process **(Okoronkwo, 2013).**

Two major areas of research related to teaching behaviors in clinical setting have emerged as important to the clinical education of nursing students. The first area is related to characteristics of effective clinical instructors, and the second area is related to caring behaviors of instructors in clinical setting **(Nelson, 2011)**.

Caring interactions between clinical educators and students reflect the professional-client relation. Students learn the professional role of caring through clinical learning experiences and the modeling of caring behaviors that their clinical educators demonstrate **(Eagan & Garvey, 2015)**.

Significance of the study

Faculty staff assistants' behaviors in the clinical setting play an important role in the effective clinical teaching process. As faculty model positive caring and effective teaching behaviors, nursing students can be professionally trained to develop this competence. Nursing students who witness uncaring teaching behaviors become hardened, carefree, depressed, or frightened during the learning experiences this leads to graduate nurses who perform carless nursing actions. Caring attitude and environment fosters student learning and success.

In addition, the identification of nurse students and faculty staff assistants' perceptions regarding teaching behaviors and clarifying the differences and similarities of both groups may provide data to establish programs for faculty staff assistants about effective clinical teaching behaviors that could facilitate their methods for bridging up theory and practice gaps.

Aim of the study

This study aims at:

1. Identify nursing students' perception regarding to teaching behaviors of their faculty staff assistants in clinical setting.

2. Determine faculty staff assistants' perception regarding to teaching behaviors in clinical setting.

3. Compare among perceptions of nursing students and faculty staff assistants regarding to teaching behaviors in clinical setting.

Research question:

Is there a difference between nursing students and faculty staff assistants' perception regarding to teaching behaviors in clinical setting?

Subjects and Methods

Research design:

A descriptive, cross sectional, comparative research design was used to carry out the study.

Research setting:

The study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing Ain-Shams University which consisted of six scientific departments; namely, Medical Surgical Nursing Department I&II, Maternity and Gynecology Nursing Department, Pediatric Nursing Department, Community Health Nursing Department, Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing Department and Nursing Administration Department.

Study subjects:

The subjects of this study included two groups, namely nurse students group and faculty staff assistants group**.**

A- Nurse students group: Based on proportional stratified random sample, nurse students were selected. Three hundred fifty-five nurse students out from seven hundred and thirteen in academic year 2016-2017 were included in the study. Who represent **50**% from the total number of nurse students at different scholar years was included in the study sample. The study sample excluded nurse students on the first scholar year because they had short term clinical training so it was difficult for them to assess the teaching behaviors in clinical setting.

B- Faculty staff assistants group: All the available faculty staff assistants (assistant lecturers and demonstrators), who are working at the previously mentioned settings were eligible to be included in the study. The total number of faculty staff assistants was (55). This group was divided into (30) assistant lecturers and (25) demonstrators.

Data collection tool

Two data collection tools were used to carry out the current study namely; Nurse students' perception regarding teaching behaviors questionnaire sheet and faculty staff assistants' perception regarding teaching behaviors questionnaire sheet.

I. **Nurse students' perception regarding teaching behaviors questionnaire sheet (Appendix I)**

It aimed to assess nurse students' perception regarding teaching behaviors in the clinical setting. It consisted of three parts:

Part I: It aimed to collect data related to demographic characteristics of nurse students as age, gender, scholar years, pre-faculty education and place of residence.

Part II: Characteristics of effective clinical instructors: This part was developed by **Whitehead, (1997)** and modified by the researcher. It aimed to assess the effective teaching characteristics of the clinical nursing instructors as perceived by nurse students. It included 39 items which grouped under five main dimensions as the following: Interpersonal relationship (11 items), Personality traits (7 items), Teaching practices (7 items), knowledge and

experience (9 items), and evaluation procedure (5 items).

❖ Scoring system

Responses of the participants were measured on a five point Likert scale that ranged from "not important" to "most important". "Not important" was scored as (1); while "most important" was scored as (5). All items related to each dimension are summed up and a mean score was calculated. High perception level if $\geq 60\%$, while it was considered low perception level if $< 60\%$ **(Beeckman et al., 2010).**

Part III: caring behaviors of clinical Instructors: It aimed to assess nurse students' perception of clinical instructors' caring behaviors. It developed by **(Wade, 2006)** and modified by the researcher. It consists of 31 items grouped under five main dimensions as the following: the instill confidence through caring (11 items), supportive learning climate (10 items), appreciation of life meanings (3 items), control versus flexibility (4 items) and respectful sharing (3items).

❖ Scoring system

Responses of the participants were measured on five point Likert scales that ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". **"**Strongly disagree" was scored as (1); while "strongly agree" was scored as (5)**.** Negative items had reverse score as "strongly disagree" was scored as (5); while "strongly agree" was scored as (1). All items related to each dimension are summed up and a mean score was calculated. High perception level if $\geq 60\%$, while it was considered low perception level if $< 60\%$ **(Beeckman et al, 2010)**.

II. Faculty staff assistants' perception regarding teaching behaviors questionnaire sheet (Appendix II):

It aimed to assess faculty staff assistants' perception regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting. It consisted of three parts:

Part I: It aimed to collect data related to demographic characteristics of faculty staff assistants as age, gender, marital status, qualifications, and years of experience, academic position, and specialty.

Part II: Characteristics of effective clinical instructors: This part was developed by **Whitehead, (1997)** and modified by the researcher. It aimed to assess the effective teaching characteristics of the clinical nursing instructors as perceived by faculty staff assistants. It included 39 items which grouped under five main dimensions as the following: Interpersonal relationship (11 items), Personality traits (7 items), Teaching practices (7 items), knowledge and experience (9 items), and evaluation procedure (5 items).

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I. Operational design

The operational design includes preparatory phase, pilot study and field work.

A. Preparatory phase:

In this phase, the researcher reviewed the current available related local and international literature, textbook magazines and articles related to subject, for updating and modifying data collection tools.

Tools validity:

After the construction of data collection tool, face and content validity of the tools was assessed by jury group consisted of seven teaching staff from all scientific departments working at Faculty of Nursing Ain Shams University. Tools were distributed to the Jury members to judge its comprehensiveness, accuracy and clarity of its language. Based on Jury opinions, addition and/or omission of some items were done.

Tools reliability:

Tools reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha coefficient. Test of reliability for characteristics of effective clinical instructors' questionnaire yield Cronbach alpha 0.957. Also, test reliability for the caring behaviors of clinical instructors' questionnaire showed 0.904.

B. Pilot study:

The pilot study was carried out on (36) nursing students and (6) faculty staff assistants. They represent 10% of the total study subjects. The aim of the pilot study was to ascertain clarity of the study tools, feasibility and understandability, in addition to estimate the time required for filling the questionnaire sheets. The pilot study was conducted one week before data collection. The filling time for the questionnaire sheets took about 30 - 40 minutes. Nurse students who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the main study sample.

C. Field work:

Data collection of the study was started at the first semester of the academic year (2016-2017). It took three months started at the beginning of October 2016 and completed by the end of December 2016.

Regarding nurse students group, the researcher introduced herself to them and explained the purpose of the study and its related benefit return. All nurse students from the participating academic levels were invited by the researcher to participate during the time of a scheduled class two days every weak (2hrs/day) in their classes and laps. The researcher distributed the questionnaire sheet to nurse students and explained its components.

Regarding faculty staff assistants group, the researcher introduced herself to the participants and explained the purpose of the study and its related benefit return. All faculty staff assistants from the participating scientific departments were invited by the researcher to participate at different suitable times in their work settings because they are

not allowed at all time. The researcher distributed the questionnaire sheet to faculty staff assistants and explained its components.

Participation was voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher checked each questionnaire sheet after being completed by each participant to ensure the completion of all information.

Ethical consideration

Prior to the actual work of the research study, ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research Ethical Committee of Faculty of Nursing Ain Shams University. In addition, an official letter was issued from Dean Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University to the head of each department. The letter included the aim of the study and proposed benefits to obtain their permission and cooperation for collecting data. Informal agreement was also obtained from each participant in the study. The participants were informed about their right to withdraw at any time. The collected data will be kept confidential and would be only for scientific research.

II. Administrative design

Before embarking on the study, an official letter was submitted from the dean faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, to obtain the permission from head of each scientific department to collect data for the study **(Appendix V)**. Then the researcher met head of each scientific department to explain the aim of the study, the expected benefits and obtain their approval. Confidentiality of the information was ensured. Individual oral consent also obtained from each participant in the study.

III. Statistical Design

The collected data were coded and entered into the statistical package for the social science (SPSS 15.0.1). Statistical presentation and analysis of the present study was done using the frequencies and percentages for non-numerical data, and mean, standard deviation (SD) and range for parametric numerical data. Independent sample t-test was used to assess the statistical significance of the difference of a parametric variable between two independent means of two study groups. Qualitative variables were compared using chi-square test, which was used to examine the relationship between two qualitative variables but when the expected count is less than 5 in more than 20% of the cells; Fisher's Exact Test was used. Pearson's correlation coefficient test (r) used to conducted correlation matrix. Statistical significance was considered at P value <0.05 and high statistical significance was considered at P value <0.001.

Result

Table (1): shows that near two thirds of nurse students (65.9%) had age ranged between 20 and 22 years, majority of them (83.1%) had secondary school education, and more than two thirds (70.1%) were living with their families.

Figure (1): shows that, approximately one third of nurse students (33.8%) were in the second scholar year, slightly more than one quarter (26.8%) of them were in the third year while, the fourth scholar year had the highest percentage (39.4%).

Figure (2): shows that approximately two thirds of nurse students were females (67.1%).

Table (2): shows that the majority of the studied faculty staff assistants (90.9%) were females, less than two thirds of them(65.5%) were married, more than three fifths (63.6%) had a master degree.

Figure (3): shows that less than two third of the studied faculty staff assistants (63.6%) had age ranged between 26-30 years, about one quarter of them (25.4%) had age more than 30 years and the lowest percentage of them had age less than 26 years.

Figure (4): shows that the majority of the studied faculty staff assistants (47.3%) had work experience ranged between 4-8 years, slightly more than one quarter of them had work experience less than 4 years and more than 8 years ((25.5% &27.3% respectively).

Table (3): shows that the dimensions "Evaluation procedures" and "Knowledge and experience" had the highest mean scores (83.05 ± 13.87) & (82.66 ± 12.46) respectively among nurse students while the dimensions "Evaluation procedures" and "Interpersonal relationship" had the highest mean scores (87.71+8.74) & (85.85+8.82) respectively among faculty staff assistants.

There were highly statistically significant differences between the two study subjects' perception regarding characteristics of effective clinical instructor except the dimension "Knowledge and Experience".

Table (4): shows that the dimension "instills confidence through caring" had the highest mean score (81.69 ± 12.09) & (87.14 ± 8.52) among nurse students and faculty staff assistants respectively. There were highly statistically significant differences between the two study subjects' perception regarding caring behaviors of clinical instructors except the dimensions "appreciation of life's meanings" & "respectful sharing".

Table (5): shows that, there were highly statistically significant differences between the two study subjects' perception regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting

Table (1): Demographic characteristics of nurse students (n=355).

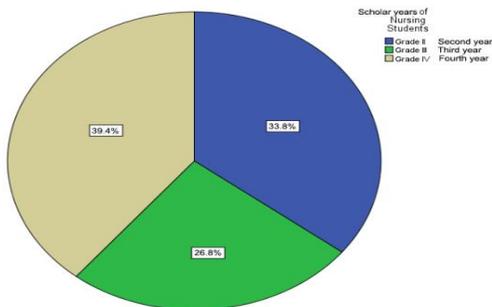| Demographic characteristics of nurse students		No.	%
Age (year)	Less than 20 years	72	20.3%
	20-22 years	234	65.9%
	More than 22 years	49	13.8%
Pre faculty education	Secondary School	295	83.1%
	Nursing Institute	60	16.9%
Place of residence	Inside student campus	106	29.9%
	Living with their families	249	70.1%

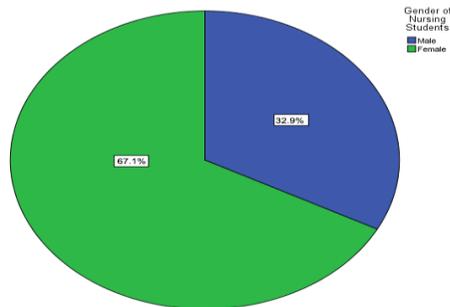**Figure (1):** Distribution of the nurse students by scholar years.

Figure (2): Distribution of the nurse students by gender.

Table (2): Demographic characteristics of the faculty staff assistants (n=55).

| Demographic Characteristics of Faculty Staff Assistants		No.	%
Gender	Male	5	9,1%
	Female	50	90,9%
Marital status	Single	19	34.5%
	Married	36	65.5%
Qualifications	Bachelor degree	20	36.4%
	Master degree	35	63.6%
Specialty	Medical Surgical Nursing	14	25.5%
	Maternity Health and gynecology Nursing	10	18.2%
	Pediatric Nursing	7	12.7%
	Community Health Nursing	7	12.7%
	Psychiatric Nursing and Mental Health	8	14.5%
	Nursing Administration	9	16.4%
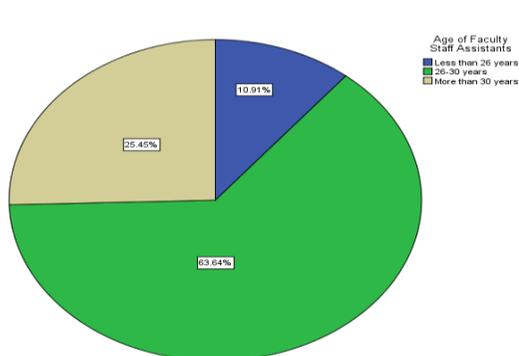
Figure (3): Distribution of the studied faculty staff assistants by age.
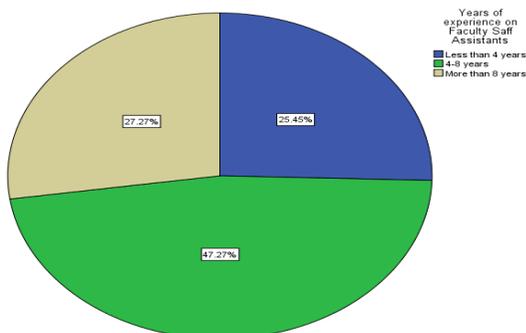

Figure (4): Distribution of the studied faculty staff assistants by years of experience.

Table (3): Comparison between study subjects' perception regarding total dimensions of characteristics of effective clinical instructor.

Characteristics of effective clinical instructors dimensions	Group		t-test	P-value
	Nursing students	Faculty Staff Assistants		
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Interpersonal relationship	78.66 ± 14.62	85.85 ± 8.82	4.937	0.000**
Personality traits	78.64 ± 14.34	84.42 ± 9.36	3.830	0.000**
Teaching practices	80.05 ± 13.63	85.45 ± 10.42	2.797	0.005**
Knowledge and experience	82.66 ± 12.46	85.54 ± 9.45	1.626	0.105
Evaluation procedures	83.05 ± 13.87	87.71 ± 8.74	3.276	0.001**
Total mean score	82.51 ± 12.00	87.94 ± 8.44	3.216	0.001**

Table (4):Comparison between study subjects' perception regarding total dimensions of caring behaviors of clinical instructors.

Caring behaviors of clinical instructors Dimensions	Group		t-test	P-value
	Nursing students	Faculty Staff Assistants		
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Instills confidence through caring	81.69 ± 12.09	87.14 ± 8.52	4.058	0.000**
Supportive learning climate	76.11 ± 11.62	80.15 ± 7.70	3.268	0.001**
Appreciation of life's meanings	79.01 ± 13.83	81.45 ± 11.60	1.234	0.218
Control versus flexibility	72.16 ± 16.96	82.18 ± 10.44	5.851	0.000**
Respectful sharing	79.98 ± 11.83	82.79 ± 12.15	1.584	0.117
Total mean score	78.24 ± 10.06	83.27 ± 7.02	4.540	0.000**

Table (5): Comparison between study subjects' perception regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting.

Teaching behaviors in clinical setting	Group		T-test	P-value
	Nursing students	Faculty staff assistants		
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
1-Characteristics of effective clinical instructors	82.51 ± 12.00	87.94 ± 8.44	3.216	0.001**
2-Caring behaviors of clinical instructors	78.24 ± 10.06	83.27 ± 7.02	4.540	0.000**
Total mean score	80.37 ± 11.3	85.60 ± 7.73	3.883	0.00**

Discussion

Teaching behaviors of faculty staff assistants are important and needed to be the focus of clinical education in order to promote helpful behaviors that enhance the learning process. Exploration of effective characteristics and caring behaviors of clinical instructors will be beneficial to improve educational programs for developing nurses. Effective teaching behaviors lead to enhancing students' confidence, involving them in decision making and setting goals, making learning meaningful, and helping them to become more autonomous in their discipline (**Atwood, 2017**).

The current study aimed to identify nursing students' perception regarding teaching behaviors of their faculty staff assistants in clinical setting, determine faculty staff assistants' perception regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting, and compare among perceptions of nursing students and faculty staff assistants regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting.

Regarding subjects' perception about the total dimensions for characteristics of effective clinical instructors, the findings of the present study indicated that the highest percentage of nurse students perceived "evaluation procedures" as the most important effective teaching characteristic followed by "knowledge and experience", "teaching practices", "interpersonal relationship", and "personality traits" respectively. This result may be an indication of the students' desire to deal with fairly evaluator, knowledgeable and competent faculty staff assistants who help students to make decisions based on their information and feedback.

This result is in agreement with **Thompson et al. (2016)** who stated that the five categories of characteristics of effective clinical instructor are ranked in the following order evaluation procedures as

most important, followed by knowledge and experience, teaching practices, interpersonal relationship and personality traits as perceived by the 3rd year nurse students.

Also, the present study indicated that the highest percentage of faculty staff assistants perceived evaluation procedures as the most important effective teaching characteristics and personality traits are the lowest characteristics. This may be due faculty staff assistant recognizes the importance of the manner and type of feedback provided to the students. This indication of faculty staff assistants' awareness of the use of supportive and constructive evaluation procedures may promote more successful student learning environment. Despite the lower rating of personality traits, nurse students and faculty staff assistants consider these characteristics to be a component of effective teaching.

This is supported by **Ali, (2012)** who stated that personality traits are the lowest category while the knowledge and experience followed by interpersonal relationship and evaluation procedures are the most important effective characteristics from student point of view. Also, **Nelson (2011)** stated that nursing students rated effective characteristics such as knowledge and evaluation procedures as the most important one.

Regarding the total dimensions of caring behaviors of clinical instructors, the findings of present study indicated that nurse students' perception of faculty staff assistants' caring behaviors is highest in the dimensions of instills confidence through caring followed by respectful sharing and lowest in the dimension of control versus flexibility. This is supported by faculty staff assistants whose perception of caring behaviors is highest in the same two dimensions respectively, but it lowest in the dimension of supportive learning climate.

This finding may be due to faculty staff assistants' awareness that seeking welcoming

attitudes and instills confidence, put nurse students at ease and allow nurse students to assimilate into their professional and caring role. Nurse students want faculty staff assistants who foster respect and attentive attitude toward them. This is supported by **Nelson (2011)** who stated that nursing students perceived their clinical instructors' demonstration of caring behaviors highest in the subscale of instills confidence through caring.

Regarding study subjects' perception of teaching behaviors in the clinical setting, the findings of the present study indicated that nurse students and faculty staff assistants had a positive perception on teaching behaviors in the clinical setting for all its components. Moreover the highest percentage of nurse students and faculty staff assistants agreed up on the importance of characteristics of effective clinical instructors. This finding may be due to nurse students and faculty staff assistants' awareness of the importance of effective teaching behaviors that contributing to a positive learning experience in the clinical setting.

The present study findings revealed that the majority of nurse students showed high perception level of characteristics of effective clinical instructors and caring behaviors. This finding may be due to the nurse students' need for effective faculty staff assistants who guide, support, stimulate, and facilitate student learning and seeking caring behaviors. Effective teaching behaviors of faculty staff assistant will facilitate student learning in the clinical setting. This finding is in agreement with **D'Costa & Swarnadas, (2016)** who revealed that students perceived all effective teaching skills and behaviors which influenced their learning as very important.

On the other hand, all the studied faculty staff assistants showed high perception regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructors and the majority of them showed high perception regarding

caring behaviors. This finding may be due to faculty staff assistants' awareness of their significant role in nursing students' development and in creating a positive learning experience in the practice setting that frame students' perception of the work environment. This finding is in agreement with **Bliss (2014)** who revealed that clinical faculty assistants showed high perception level regarding demonstration of effective teaching behaviors.

However, there is a highly statistically significant difference between nurse students and faculty staff assistants' perception regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting. Academic and work experience might affect faculty staff assistants' perception which makes the difference. Also the difference suggests the role of the faculty staff assistant is highly valued by both nurse students and faculty staff assistants.

The findings of the present study answered the research question "Is there a difference between nurse students and faculty staff assistants' perception regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting?"

Conclusion

The current study concluded that nurse students perceived evaluation procedures as the most important effective teaching characteristics followed by knowledge and experience while personality traits are the lowest important dimension. On the other hand, faculty staff assistants perceived evaluation procedures as the most important effective teaching characteristics followed by interpersonal relationship while personality traits are also the lowest important dimension.

The highest score of caring behaviors was from the dimensions of instills confidence through caring and respectful sharing as reported by both nurse students and faculty staff assistants. Nurse students and faculty staff assistants had a positive

perception regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting for all components.

There was a highly statistically significant difference between nurse students and faculty staff assistants' perceptions regarding teaching behaviors in clinical setting.

Recommendations

In the light of present study findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1- Establish an orientation program for newly appointed faculty staff assistants about the principles of adult learning, how to communicate with students, how to assess students' needs, and how to evaluate students' performance.

2- Enhance faculty staff assistants' awareness about their vital role to alleviate students' anxiety in the clinical setting.

3- Continuous support and reward from the faculty for effective performance of faculty staff assistants.

4- Provide faculty staff assistants with training courses about effective clinical teaching behaviors

5- Establish periodical meetings with faculty staff assistants to discuss their clinical work problems and examine clinical issues with responsible faculty members to improve the clinical learning process and foster the development of self-confidence.

6- Further studies should be developed to assess the relationship between faculty staff assistants caring behaviors and students' anxiety.

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