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Problems that Influence the Academic Learning and Clinical Practices among Nursing Students

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Abstract

Introduction: High quality of care is one of the requirements of nursing which depends on the nursing competency. In this connection, the aim of this research was to determine the problems that influence the academic learning (nursing' educational program) and clinical practices from the viewpoint of student nurses. **Methods:** The study design was used descriptive cross-sectional. The sample consisted of 148 participant of general Nursing students of first year, second year and third .was in learning and practice The instrument of the study was a two-part researcher-made questionnaire with 18 questions in the clinical learning problems to assess problems related to the academic and clinical practices in nursing students , questionnaire was validated in terms of both face and content validity. Its reliability, using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, was 0.72 in the theoretical-clinical and 0.73 in the clinical realm. Both descriptive and analytical statistics were used to analyze the data, using SPSS software. **Results**: The results of this study indicated that from the participants' viewpoints, the most important problems in the academic learning were as follows: lack of academic research the clinical period (88.1%), no application of theoretical aspects of the nursing process in practice (76.4%), insufficient knowledgeable and professional educators (70.3%),the use of traditional routine-oriented methods on the wards (74.2%). Participants viewpoints, the most important problems in the clinical practice were as follows: insufficient time for performance based on knowledge in relation to the nurse's workload (79.0%), weakness and usefulness of scientific function encouragement systems in clinic (53.3%), and learnt theoretical subjects not coming into practice in clinical fields after graduation (71.6%).**Conclusion:** Efforts to reduce the gap between the theoretical and practical (clinical function) knowledge in educational and work environment are required to improve the training of qualified nurses.

Keywords: Clinical practice; academic training; research results utilization; theoretical content; inappropriate clinical practices**.**

Introduction

Education comprises specific skills of teaching and learning. Education is also communication of knowledge, good judgment, and wisdom. Education struggles to close the gap between knowledge and practice. Student learns the necessary technical and interpersonal skills through education. Ultimate purpose of education is to increase the quality of care for the population who served by nurses (Ajani and Moez, 2011).

A clinical placement is an authorized section of place in which students attend structured clinical experience as a part of specific unit. Many students report that clinical placement is most challenging part of learning. However, student nurses follow a number of policies and requirements in clinical setting (Fairbrother *et al*., 2016).

The problems which influence the learning in clinical and academic placement are inappropriate clinical practices and unsuitable programming of clinical education. Nursing education encompasses on academic education and clinical

practice. Gap between learning and practice is serious issue in nursing education (Rafiee *et al*., 2014).

In clinical setting the problem which students are facing such as not use of evidence base practice, not implementation of nursing process in practice, shortage of time for implementation, lack of facilities in clinical site, lack of knowledge about advantages and disadvantages of scientific function in clinical placement etc. There are different problems which students are facing during their academic training. The major problems are such as course content is not relevant to clinical need; educators follow traditional ways of teaching and theoretical content based on specific knowledge (Sharghi *et al*., 2015).

Research shows that evidence base practice is not applied properly. Lack of evidence base practice is the main problem in clinical setting. Student nurses are not fully trained for evidence base practice and not apply research findings into practice. They are still acquiring the full public health benefits (Wallace, 2013).

Nursing students are facing a series of challenges day by day in the clinical practices. Lack of implementation process in nursing is one of the major problems in clinical area. Implementation of the nursing process in practical nursing are not achieving due to poor practices. Students have no knowledge about the principles of action in nursing process. Almost 90% staff nurses have poor knowledge about implementation of nursing process in practice. Due to lack of this knowledge they are unable to provide proper care in clinical placement (Hagos *et al*., 2014).

Nursing educators are responsible for learning of students in academic setting as well in the clinical practice. The development of competent practice is a primary goal of nursing education. But unfortunately high qualified persons are not available in the clinical site. Thus, in the clinical area students are not able to relate theory to practice (Rafiee *et al*., 2014).

Teacher's qualification has great impact on student's learning. Students taught by teachers with higher qualification performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications. However, the experience of the teacher is significant that impact the student's academic performance in clinical setting. Teachers with professional qualifications in higher level teach well in clinical area (Owolabi and Adedayo, 2012).

Clinical instructors are hired on the base of their clinical experience despite the higher qualification. It is major problem in clinical setting which student face. Majority of nurse educators join academia with a practice-driven education. They often lack a strong grounding in the field of education An individual is not proficient to teach clinical skills even though they have superior clinical skills (Paige, 2013).

Clinical instructor influence the student's learning greatly who eventually graduate and shape nursing practice. The behaviour of clinical instructors plays a significant role in the development of professional nursing skills. Teacher enhance the characteristics of students such as professional knowledge, role modelling and clinical competence (Ismail *et al*., 2015).

Shortage of time and burden of work is one of the problems which students face during clinical practices. Shortage of timing and burden of work is the basic reason of gap between learning and practices for students in clinical site(Jackson, 2015).

Traditional oriented ways of teaching create poor clinical practices for nursing students. Traditional ways of teaching not play a vital role in the learning process. It effects the utilization of clinical practices. There is no close collaboration between clinical practices and nursing schools. Traditional practices not promote positive attitude for the improvement of clinical training (Zhou *et al*., 2015).

The nursing education system does not offer theoretical content related to clinical requirement. Therefore, student faces the problems during acquiring knowledge. Education system not enhances the knowledge according to clinical need (Shahzadi *et al*., 2017).

Education system not introduces the students to the clinical environment. Clinical environment includes outpatient, in-patient wards and social environment. When students are in class room they are unaware of clinical environment. After interaction with clinical placement they feel ambiguous and strange while performing their skills. Clinical setting is the situation which increases the knowledge and makes the understanding of the real picture of practical environment. In addition, learning and practice remains always different (Arabshahi *et al*., 2015).

These difficulties obstruct the progress of learning. Nurses are accountabilities on every clinical setting and practice sites. Students have needed to prepare themselves to integrate into practice setting. Due to variety and description existing in the nursing profession, there is need for nurse to develop the essential knowledge skill in their practice. This practical mission that consist of nurse educators to be proficient clinical authorities(Poindexter, 2013).

Learning environment construct a structure for learning activities. The creation of an effective experiential learning environment for students is initiated by the teacher through clearly defined educational parameters. In the field of education, a number of terms have been articulated that merge the concepts of intercultural learning and competency(B. Stevenson, 2011).

Problem Statement

In Pakistan the nursing school focuses on the academic learning of the students but there is lack of clinical practices, 49% people do not adopt their learning in practices. 62 % people do not get appropriate facilities in clinical setting for practices. In clinical setting 86% people do not facilitate by highly qualified instructors. The faculty at the clinical setting is not up to the standard that can decrease the problems and enhance the nursing student's performance in clinical practices (Shahzadi *et al*., 2017).

There are many problems which have influence on students learning during academic training as well as at clinical setting. Less trained clinical instructors and week bonding between teachers and students is one of the major reasons. These problems hinder the professional growth. Due to these problems quality care of nursing suffer a lot. So the researcher is interest to find these problems during academic training and clinical placement.

Study Objective

To determine the problems that influence the academic learning and clinical practices among nursing students.

Review of Literature

The close relationship between clinical and the educational training has a unique place in nursing profession. Study in Iran that clinical skill of the nurses, and specialty, the newly graduated nurses is not perfect in the ideal clinical practice. results revealed from the students of Iranian Medical University that imperative theoretical and clinical issues(88.9%) related to academic are not practiced in clinical areas,(85.6%) theoretical aspects of the nursing procedure are not being applied in practice (81.1%) teachers are not knowledgeable and professional educators.(75.6%) are not follow traditional routine-oriented ways in their nursing care (Sharghi *et al*., 2015).

Furthermore a study revealed that there are many problems in using of evidence-based method, appropriate procedure performance in the students of Tehran. Results show that 56% has low experimental capability involved in nurse training. 63% students not prepared the checklist before going to clinical area and not inform the instructor that the main objectives are achieved during the care sector. This problem is very common in today nursing student's clinical instructor not try to minimize these gaps of clinical practices (Kenari, 2014).

In additionally the results of a study revealed that 86.5% insufficient time for performance based on knowledge connection to the nurses workload, 85.2% weakness of function encouragement systems in clinical and 75.6% are not learnt about theoretical subjects and not come into training in clinical fields after graduation. clinical instructors not do much efforts to reduce the gap between the theoretical and practical (clinical function) they are not

try to improve knowledge in educational and work environment for the betterment of qualified nurses (Liu and Aungsuroch, 2018).

Another study found in Technical Nursing Institute Cairo University Egypt that 70.8% of students' are not fulfillment by their clinical placement. 74. 8% students are not prepared well for the required competencies in clinical placement. 67.4% student less satisfied due to no professional support during clinical placement. Most of the students received learning support from the clinical supervisors but not receive much attention from their clinical instructors. In spite some staff nurses are interested to help new graduate students in clinical placement, they are not much aware of the skills and strategies in clinical training and not act as a clinical instructor. Therefore, deficiency lack of well experienced staff impact on students' fulfillment with clinical placement which weaken the clinical skills of students (Grimm, 2017).

The findings obtained from the study that 50% students are inadequate communication, insufficient preparation, and enthusiastic responses in the clinical training. Moreover, 45.5% student's lack of ability in confronting the clinical environment. Student's lacks of information, insufficient preparation for entering the clinical environment destroy their learning processes and make them anxious. It's a teachers' responsibilities to treat nursing students properly in the clinical training, as well as increasing their confidence and reduce their fears because nursing teachers to be a role model for students(Jamshidi, Molazem, Sharif, Torabizadeh, and Najafi Kalyani, 2016).

According to a research that the Greeks nursing learners have encouraging perception of clinical education environment in pediatric hospitals while there is still room for enhancement. The current scale is appropriate instrument for calculation of clinical training by learners. The questionnaire was formed by researchers and contained of thirty four questions. Questionnaire comprised questions about demographic characteristics and four parts of clinical training. They determine that nursing learners in their learning were mollified with clinical educational environment (Dafogianni *et al*., 2015).

Mohamed reported that nursing learners underlined negative regions that could be occupied into attention by the faculty followers, clinical teachers, and clinical staff to improve education in clinical situation. Approval with clinical assignment and learning self-efficacy was openly proportionate to learners' accomplishment (Al Sebaee *et al*., 2017)

Methodology

Study Setting

The setting for this study was College of Nursing, Allama Iqbal Medical College of Jinnah Hospital Lahore.

Study Design

Descriptive cross-sectional analytic study design was used.

Study Population

Study population for this research work was the general nursing students of College of Nursing, Allama Iqbal Medical College of Jinnah Hospital Lahore. Total populations of nursing students was 236.

Sampling Method

Convenient sampling technique was used.

Sample Size

Sample size was determined by using the "Slovin's formula" (Slovene's, 1960). This formula is given as follows.

$n = N/1 + N (e)^2$

(n) = sample size, N = Total population, (e) = margin of error

$n = N/1 + (0.05)^2$

$n = N/1 + N (0.05)^2$

$n = 236/1 + 200(0.0025)$

$n = 236/1 + 0.5$

$n = 236/1.5$

$n = 148$

Sampling Technique

Convenient sampling was used for the data collection.

Inclusion Criteria

General nursing students was include in this study. Female was included. Age of participant was 18-30 years old. Those participant was included who was willing to participate.

Exclusion Criteria

BS Nursing (Generic) and midwifery students were excluded in this study. Male was excluded. Ages of participant are below 18 years and above 30 years was excluded. Those participants who was not willing to participate.

Data Collection Method and Procedure

Data was collected by distributing questionnaire among nursing students. Questionnaire adopted from a study conducted by (Sharghi *et al.*, 2015)). Questionnaire consists of three parts, first part about demographic data and second about problems related to academic learning and third problems related to practice. Questionnaire comprises of 18 quantitative questions.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed by using SPSS version 21. For individual item means, median, mode frequency distribution and standard deviations were reported. Chi-square test was applied to measure the associations existed between the demographic variables and individual items. P value is

considered $P < 0.05$ that is significant statistically for the all analyses. Relationship of clinical relevance employment with subscale "bioscience subject's relationship to nursing practices" was checked by Pearson correlation test.

Ethical Consideration

Permission was taken from institutional review board (IRB) committee of university of Lahore. Permission was taken from HOD of LSN, UOL and Principal of College of Nursing, Jinnah Hospital Lahore. A consent form was attached with each questionnaire for respondents. Confidentiality and privacy of participants was maintained.

Study Duration

This study approximately completed in 4 months from February, 2018 to May, 2018.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicated that from the participants' viewpoints, the most important problems in the academic learning were as follows: lack of academic research the clinical period (88.1%), no application of theoretical aspects of the nursing process in practice (76.4%), insufficient knowledgeable and professional educators (70.3%), the use of traditional routine-oriented methods on the wards (74.2%). Participants viewpoints, the most important problems in the clinical practice were as follows: insufficient time for performance based on knowledge in relation to the nurse's workload (79.0%), weakness and usefulness of scientific function encouragement systems in clinic (53.3%), and learnt theoretical subjects not coming into practice in clinical fields after graduation (71.6%). Views of the participant has been merged into two categories very disagree + disagree are to be consider as disagree and agree + strong agree are to be consider as agree. 86.5% participant were agree that Non-use of research results in clinical wards but 4.1% were disagree. 76.4% were agree that Failure to implement of the nursing process in practice but 8.8% were disagree. 70.3% were agree that Nurses with MSc degree teaches in the Nursing faculties not in clinical ward but 8.2% participant were disagree. 74.3% were agree that Educators following traditional ways of teaching in their nursing care on the wards but 6.1% were disagree. 80.4% were agree that There is a gap between treatment and education system but.54.1% participant were agree that Educators use problem solving method in order to track students' but 28.4% were disagree learning. 79.8% were agree that Educators' weaknesses in scientific procedures based on theoretical courses in the internship environment but 6.8% were disagree. 83.8% were agree that teaching the theoretical subjects based on specific knowledge of nursing but 6.1% were disagree.12.2% were agree that the amount of time is enough to devote teaching special nursing knowledge but 79% were disagree. 56.8% were agree that Relevance of theoretical course's content and clinical needs but 37.1%

were disagree. 44.6% were agree that Effective and useful scientific relation between educators, nurses and doctors but 27% were disagree. 71% were agree that Learnt theoretical subjects not coming into practice in clinical environment after graduation but 15.5% were disagree. 79.1% were agree that Incompetent systems for encouraging scientific performance in clinical wards but 5.4% were disagree. 83.8% were agree that Lack of caring standards based on nursing knowledge in the ward but 6.8% were disagree. 79% were agree that insufficient time for performance of procedures based on knowledge in connection with the nurse's workload but 7.4% were disagree. 37.8% were agree that Content of education program is according to nurse's professional needs but 43.9% were disagree. 53.3% were agree that Weakness and usefulness of scientific function encouragement systems in clinic but 21.7% were disagree.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows the participant's demographic data. Majority of participants (54.7 %) were from the age group of 19-22 years, 25.7% were from 15-18 years participated only 19.6% were from the age group of 23-26 years, no any participant above 26 years. All participants (100 %) were female (n= 148) Most of the participant's 44.6% were from 3rd year, 33.8% from 2nd year, 21.6% from 1st year.

Table 2 Correlational result reveals that Age of the participant has no association with current year of study as r value is .223, sig is .007 and N value is 148. it has no association with education related problem as r value is .003, sig is .450, and N value is 148. Age of the participant has no association with education related problem as r value

is -.063, sig is .450 and N is 148. Current year of study has no association with education related problem as r value is -.023, sig is .778 and N is 148. Current year of study has no association with education related problem as r value is -.143, sig is .083 and n value is 148. Education related problem has no association with Clinical Related Problem as r value is .241, sig is .003, and N value is 148.

Table 1: Demographic Data

Demographic characteristics		*f* (%)
Age	15-18 y	38 (25.7%)
	19-22 y	81 (54.7%)
	23-26 y	29 (19.6%)
	Total	**148 (100.0)**
Sex	Male	0(0%)
	Female	100(100%)
	Total	**148 (100.0)**
Current year of study	1st year	32 (21.6%)
	2nd year	50 (33.8%)
	3rd year	66 (44.6%)
	Total	**148 (100.0)**

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Tests

Correlations

		Age of Participant	Current Year 0f Study	Education Related Problem	Clinical Related Problem
age of participant	Pearson Correlation	1	.223**	.003	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007	.975	.450
	c	148	148	148	148
current year of study	Pearson Correlation	.223**	1	-.023	-.143
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007		.778	.083
	N	148	148	148	148
Education_Related_Problem	Pearson Correlation	.003	-.023	1	.241**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.975	.778		.003
	N	148	148	148	148
Clinical_Related_Problem	Pearson Correlation	-.063	-.143	.241**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.450	.083	.003	
	N	148	148	148	148

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Nursing students' responses to questionnaire. (n=148)

Descriptor	SDA *f* (%)	DA *f* (%)	N *f* (%)	A *f* (%)	SA *f* (%)
1. Education Related Problem					
Non-use of research results in clinical wards	42.6%	43.9%	9.5%	1.4%	2.7%
Failure to implement of the nursing process in practice.	39.2%	37.2%	14.9%	6.8%	2.0%
Nurses with MSc degree teaches in the Nursing faculties not in clinical ward.	37.2%	33.1%	21.6%	6.8%	1.4%
Educators following traditional ways of teaching in their nursing care on the wards.	37.8%	36.5%	19.6%	4.7%	1.4%
There is a gap between treatment and education system.	41.9%	38.5%	14.2%	5.4%	0.0%
Educators use problem solving method in order to track students' learning.	27.7%	26.4%	17.6%	21.6%	6.8%
Educators' weaknesses in scientific procedures based on theoretical courses in the internship environment.	37.2%	42.6%	13.5%	5.4%	1.4%
Teaching the theoretical subjects based on specific knowledge of nursing.	39.2%	44.6%	10.1%	5.4%	0.7%
The amount of time is enough to devote teaching special nursing knowledge	4.1%	8.1%	8.8%	58.1%	20.9%
Relevance of theoretical course's content and clinical needs.	31.8%	25.0%	6.1%	27.0%	10.1%
Effective and useful scientific relation between educators, nurses and doctors.	18.2%	26.4%	28.4%	16.2%	10.8%
2. Clinical Related Problem					
Learnt theoretical subjects not coming into practice in clinical environment after graduation.	39.2%	31.8%	13.5%	5.4%	10.1%
Incompetent systems for encouraging scientific performance in clinical wards	28.4%	50.7%	15.5%	4.7%	0.7%
Lack of caring standards based on nursing knowledge in the ward.	48.0%	35.8%	9.5%	5.4%	1.4%
Insufficient time for performance of procedures based on knowledge in connection with the nurse's workload.	43.9%	35.1%	13.5%	5.4%	2.0%
Content of education program is according to nurse's professional needs.	14.2%	23.6%	18.2%	33.1%	10.8%
Weakness and usefulness of scientific function encouragement systems in clinic.	29.7%	23.6%	25.0%	17.6%	4.1%

Key: Strongly Disagree (SDA), Disagree (DA), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA).

The aim of the current study is to find out the educational and clinical issues to attain capability by nurses in terms of academic staff, nursing students, and graduated nurses' viewpoints. Current study shows that the most significant issue in the nursing education was Non-use of research results in clinical wards and this would led to non-evidence based training. 86.5% participant were agree that there was non-use of research results in clinical wards but only 4.1% were disagree (Sharghi *et al.*, 2015) was also agreed with our findings. Madarshahian *et al*. also reported that knowledge, talent and good quality caring can be enhance using evidence based training as an alternative to traditional

training (Kenari 2014) Another imperative factor that affecting the clinical competency was educators' role. We investigate that Educators' weaknesses in running scientific procedures based on theoretical courses in the internship environment. Result of our findings shows that 79.8% participants were agreed that Educators' weaknesses in scientific procedures based on theoretical courses in the internship environment but 6.8% participant were disagreed. Masoodi *et al*. reported that two most important problems facing by the educators had been referred to the lack of appropriate environment and lack of sufficient confidence for the scientific discussions when

essential(Masoudi, Afzali *et al.* 2009) Current study shows that 83.8% participant were agreed that Lack of appropriate facilities in the ward in order of care based on nursing knowledge but 6.8% participant were disagreed (Table 3).

Cheraghi *et al.* (2010) also reported that in nursing there is mutual relationship between knowledge and practice. Paradoxes between nursing awareness and the nursing practice which seen along with diverging organizational structure decrease the capability of the nurses in using the professional knowledge and the nursing skills. Due to These factors gap is created between theory and practice (Sharghi *et al.*, 2015). Maben *et al.* also reported that the variance between theory and practice and its reflective impacts on the psychological state of the nurses, job approval and its scientific records. He also reported that nursing care might be holistic,hospital , based on the nursing principles and research based (Maben *et al.* 2006) Current study shows that Effective and useful scientific relation between educators, nurses and doctors is an essential component according to our results 44.6% participants were agreed that Effective and useful scientific relation between educators, nurses and doctors is necessary but 27% participants were disagreed. Students they have special relationship with teacher tend to have more experience of clinical education other than those who do not have. Sundler *et al* (2014) were also satisfied with our findings. Plakht *et al.* were also reported that relations between instructor and student is important during clinical practice of the nursing students (Plakht, Shiyovich *et al.* 2013).

Limitations

This study done within a short period of time and on only one nursing institutes of Punjab (CON, JHL). Its findings cannot be generalizable to the whole Pakistan nurses experiences. The current study only focused on the diploma nursing student's experiences with those problems which influence student's learning. Further studies in this area are required to identify the problems which student's face during their learning.

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