

Great Teacher Creates Effective Learning Environment: A Study through IIUM Nursing Students' Eyes

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ABSTRAK

Persekitaran pembelajaran di pusat pengajian tinggi memainkan peranan yang sangat penting dalam menghasilkan graduan yang mempunyai kompetensi yang berkualiti. Didalam program pendidikan kejururawatan, penghasilan graduan yang boleh memberi jagarawatan yang holistik kepada komuniti adalah perkara asas yang paling penting. Oleh itu, elemen yang penting adalah aktiviti pengajaran dan interaksi pelajar-pengajar yang berkesan di pusat pengajian tinggi. Untuk mengkaji pengalaman pelajar kejururawatan UIAM dipelbagai tahun pengajian terhadap pengajar mereka dan menilai hubungkait persepsi pembelajaran persekitaran diantara pengajar dan pelajar. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif dan menggunakan dua (2) daripada lima (5) bahagian dalam instrumen 'Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measurement' (DREEM). Bahagian yang telah digunakan ialah persepsi pembelajaran oleh pelajar (SPoL) dan persepsi pelajar terhadap pengajar (SPoT) dan jumlah item bagi kedua bahagian tersebut adalah 12 dan 11. Keputusan borang soal selidik menunjukkan pelajar kejururawatan UIAM memberi skor 28.54/48.00 pada (SPoL) dan 28.13/44.00 pada (SPoT). Dapatan kajian kedua bahagian bersetuju pelajar kejururawatan UIAM berpengalaman positif terhadap pengajar mereka dan pembelajaran mereka adalah lebih kearah positif. Keputusan regresi menunjukkan 51% dari jumlah variasi pelajar terhadap persepsi kepada pengajar dijelaskan oleh persepsi pembelajaran oleh pelajar. Dalam kajian ini jumlah kedua bahagian menunjukkan persamaan dengan kajian terdahulu. Walaupun, keseluruhan skor bahagian (SPoL) dalam kajian ini menuju kategori kearah lebih positif, dua daripada 12 item memperolehi skor yang rendah daripada pelajar kejururawatan UIAM. Penyelidik sangat bersetuju dengan mendengar pendapat para pelajar adalah perkara penting untuk sesebuah institusi pendidikan. Oleh itu, pengalihan kepada pembelajaran berpusat pelajar daripada pembelajaran berpusat pengajar haruslah dilaksanakan pada masa kini di institusi-institusi pengajian tinggi. Secara am, keseluruhan min bagi (SPoT) menunjukkan para pelajar mempunyai persepsi yang positif terhadap pengajar mereka. Dalam kajian UIAM untuk bahagian ini menunjukkan satu item min skornya adalah rendah daripada 2.00. Dengan itu, kedua bahagian ini menunjukkan refleksi yang sama iaitu kejayaan akademik dan pengalaman yang positif sebagai pelajar di kampus. Isu yang dikenalpasti dalam kajian di UIAM menunjukkan keperluan untuk mewujudkan suasana yang lebih efektif dengan merancang dan melaksana untuk pembaharuan agar suasana pembelajaran dan

pengajaran dapat direalisasikan dengan berkesan.

Kata kunci: persekitaran pembelajaran, pengajar jururawat, pelajar jururawat, sekolah kejururawatan, DREEM

ABSTRACT

Learning environment in the universities plays an important role in producing highly competent graduates especially in nursing profession. Thus, the most important aspects are the teaching activities and as well as student – teacher interaction in daily environment in the university. To investigate the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) nursing students experience towards their teachers and to identify the relationship between teaching and students learning perception in their learning environment. This study used quantitative method and utilized two out of five subscales in Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measurement (DREEM). The subscales used were students' perception of learning (SPoL) , students' perception of teacher (SPoT) and total items in these both subscales are 12 and 11 items, respectively. The questionnaire results revealed that IIUM nursing students scored 28.54/48.00 in (SPoL) and 28.13/44.00 in (SPoT). Both findings showed the IIUM nursing students' experience their teachers and the learning environment are moving in towards positive directions. The regression finding was 51% of the total variation in students' perception of teacher score was explained by students' perception of learning. Although the overall subscales (SPoL) score in the current study falls in the category of a more positive perception, 2 out of 12 items were poorly scored by the IIUM nursing students. The researcher strongly agrees that listening to the expression of students is an important consideration for an educational institution. The overall mean score for (SPoT) showed that the students perceived their teachers as moving in the right direction. In this present IIUM study, one item showed a mean score of less than 2.00. As a result, these two subscales most probably should reflect the same outcome such as in their academic performance and experience greatly during their student life on campus. The arising issues from this DREEM study at IIUM embrace the need for the creation of supportive environment as well as designing and implementing interventions to remedy unsatisfactorily elements of the learning environment for more effective and successful teaching and learning to be realised.

Key words: Learning Environment, Nursing Teacher, Nursing Students, Nursing School and DREEM

INTRODUCTION

Learning environment in any institutions plays an important role in producing highly competent graduates. In the nursing programme, the main core business is to produce nursing graduates who can render comprehensive care and

treatment to the community. Thus, the most important aspects are the teaching activities and student-teacher interaction in daily environment in the university. In the learning environment, teachers have a great influence on effective learning. This is because the students' achievement or outcomes in the programme is

dependent on how effective the teacher delivers his or her expertise knowledge in the class room and clinical areas.

Gordon et al. (2000) pointed out that a teacher who describes the learning environment and the benefits to be gained from a particular patient in a ward or clinic can help students to focus their attention on those benefits. Similarly, a teacher who organizes particular tasks or roles for a student or small group ahead of time can make maximal use of whatever the environment can offer.

In the nursing profession, the teacher is the one who knows nursing education, the aims set for each practice, as well as the student nurses' skills. The teacher should be able to point out the important aspects concerning the curriculum. In the clinical setting environment, even though the clinical instructor knows the ward on which the student is practicing, the teacher is still more capable than the clinical instructor in pointing out things that are important for each particular practice (Papp et al., 2003). Therefore in the nursing program integration between the clinical practice setting and school should be developed further to establish the best learning environment for the students. Collaboration between teachers and clinical instructors is necessary to ensure appropriate learning experiences for students according to their individual needs (Newton & Smith, 1998).

If a teacher or clinical instructor does not give the students enough support regarding the planning and implementation of practical nursing situations, clinical learning is experienced as difficult (Nolan, 1998). Therefore, the teacher and clinical instructor are the most powerful variables in the learning environment (Hutchinson, 2003). We can conclude that teacher's and clinical instructor's actions, attitudes, enthusiasm, interest and expertise will affect their students' learning process directly or indirectly.

The study aims to investigate the IIUM nursing students experience among the various years towards their teachers and to identify the relationship between teaching and students learning perception in their learning environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used quantitative method. It was a cross – sectional study using questionnaires through a survey. The Dundee Ready Education Measure (DREEM) is an internationally validated, non-culturally specific inventory that provides medical and health profession teachers with a diagnostic tool to measure the state of their school's learning and teaching climate (Pimparyon et al., 2000). It could produce global reading and diagnostic analysis of undergraduate learning environment in medical schools and other health profession institutes.

This study was utilized two out of five subscales in DREEM. The subscales used were students' perception of learning (SPoL) and students' perception of teacher (SPoT) and total items in these both subscales are 12 and 11 items respectively. Items on the DREEM inventory scored 4 for Strongly Agree (SA), 3 for Agree (A), 2 for Uncertain (U), 1 for Strongly Disagree (SD). For negative statements reverse coding was required.

RESULTS

The respondent rate among the IIUM nursing students was 98.1%, which is 105 out of 107 students returned the complete surveys form. All the respondents underwent matriculation at IIUM foundation centre prior to enrolling in the nursing bachelor program and were staying together in the same hostel accommodation provided by IIUM on campus zone. The questionnaire results revealed that IIUM nursing students scored 28.54/48.00 in (SPoL) and 28.13/44.00 in

(SPoT). Both findings suggested the IIUM nursing students' experience their teachers and the learning are moving towards in positive directions. The results of regression analysis, in which the relationship on perception of learning and teacher were investigated and 51% of the total variation in students' perception of teacher score is explained by students' perception of learning.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, the both total score subscales are very similar with previous studies. Zamzuri et al. (2004), Bassaw et

al. (2003) and Whittle et al. (2007) reported scores of 28.47, 27.97 and 27.50 respectively. Currently, there is only one previous study which reported a higher score (34.57) in subscales (SPoL). This was a UK study in a fully implemented student – centered medical school (Miles & Leinster, 2007). Although the overall subscales (SPoL) score in the current study falls in the category of a more positive perception, 2 out of 12 items were poorly scored by the IIUM nursing students (mean score of less than two). These are item 13 (*the teaching is student centered*) and item 25 (*the teaching over emphasis factual learning*)

Table 1: Total (SPoL) and (SPoT) score for Bachelor of Nursing student, IIUM (N=105)

| Items | Mean(SD) |
|---|---------------------|
| Subscale 1: Students' perception of learning (SPoL) | |
| 1. I am encouraged to participate in class | 2.94(0.691)# |
| 7. The teaching is often stimulating | 2.69(0.776)# |
| 13. The teaching is student centered | 1.94(0.908)! |
| 16. The teaching is sufficiently concerned to develop my competence | 2.37(0.923)# |
| 20. The teaching is well focused | 2.27(0.891)# |
| 22. The teaching is sufficiently concerned to develop my confidence | 2.32(0.935)# |
| 24. The teaching time is put to good use | 2.60(0.967)# |
| 25. The teaching over-emphasises factual learning | 1.93(0.775)! |
| 38. I am clear about the learning objectives of the course | 2.57(0.783)# |
| 44. The teaching strategies encourages me to be an active learner | 2.36(0.952)# |
| 47. Long term learning is emphasized over short term | 2.62(0.752)# |
| 48. The teaching is too teacher-centered | 2.00(0.811)# |
| TOTAL | 28.54^/48.00 |
| Subscale 2: Students' perception of teacher (SPoT) | |
| 2. The teachers are knowledgeable | 3.18(0.818)* |
| 6. The teachers are patient with patients | 2.77(0.823)# |
| 8. The teachers ridicule the students | 2.70(0.921)# |
| 9. The teachers are authoritarian | 1.58(0.864)! |
| 18. The teachers have good communication skills with patients | 2.70(0.950)# |
| 29. The teachers are good at providing feedback to students | 2.30(0.982)# |
| 32. The teachers provide constructive criticism here | 2.44(0.759)# |
| 37. The teachers are approachable | 2.70(0.735)# |
| 39. The teachers get angry in class | 2.44(1.028)# |
| 40. The teachers are well prepared for their classes | 2.67(0.805)# |
| 50. The students irritate the teachers | 2.66(0.928)# |
| TOTAL | 28.13^/44.00 |

Note: *shaded columns are negative items*

* real positive points

aspects of the climate that could be enhanced

! should be examined more closely as they indicate problem areas

^ more positive than negative

(Table 1).

The researchers strongly agree that listening to the expression of students is an important consideration for an educational institution. Genn (2001) suggested a shift to a more student centered rather than the current teacher centered approach should be implemented in current higher education learning institutions. Consideration must also be given to a collegiate, cooperative staff – student relationship and a cooperative rather than competitive student-student interaction.

The overall mean score for (SPoT) generally suggests that the students perceived their teachers as moving in the right direction. Intan (2007), in a local DREEM study, reported a higher mean score of 31.94 for this subscale. In contrast, two others studies from the UK, ie. Miles & Leister (2007) and Whittle et al. (2007) showed scores of 31.30 and 30.40, respectively. The researchers reported that the students provided higher overall mean score although there were still items which obtained a mean score of less than 2.00. Thus, it is difficult to perceive a perfect teacher from the student's viewpoint.

In this present IIUM study, one item showed a mean score of less than 2.00 ie. item number 9 (*the teachers are authoritarian*). The researchers assume that the bachelor of nursing students said this about their teachers because the kulliyah has not really focused on a student centered curriculum yet. This finding is similar to other DREEM studies done in the Middle East (Awdah et al., 2004) and Trinidad (Bassaw et al., 2003). Both these studies reported on institutions which use teacher centered curricula where students also score less than 2.00 for the same item.

It is important to know students' understanding of the term "authoritarian" and the characteristics of such an authoritarian teacher. This will allow us to

assess their acceptability of a teacher who has these characteristics. Interventions can then take place to improve the situation in the future. When students have to follow everything that the teacher orders, it results in the creation and moulding of a 'timid student' rather than producing a high spirited and well-motivated student. During this level of higher educational, the students should be encouraged to study based on their interest and self – actualization rather than to study just because they are afraid of their teachers.

As a result, these two subscales most probably should reflect the same outcome such as in their academic performance and experience greatly during their student life on campus. The arising issues from this DREEM study at IIUM embrace the need for the creation of supportive environment as well as designing and implementing interventions to remedy unsatisfactorily elements of the learning environment for more effective and successful teaching and learning to be realised.

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